

INTELLIGENCE WARNING
OF THE TET OFFENSIVE IN SOUTH VIETNAM

11 April 1968

Approved For Release 2004/12/22 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000100070001-9

CHRONOLOGY

Approved For Release 2004/12/22 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000100070001-9

1968 - 1969 OFFENSIVES

30 January 1968 -- Tet 1968

5 May 1968 -- May Offensive

18 August 1968 -- August Offensive

16 February 1969 -- Tet 1969

January 29 -- Lunar New Year's Day celebrated in North Vietnam

- Tet cease-fire of allies canceled for I Corps Tactical Zone; cease-fire takes effect in rest of South Vietnam at 1800

- Evening cocktail party on lawn of U.S. Embassy, Saigon

January 30 -- (Vietnam time) Lunar New Year's Day celebrated in South Vietnam

- 12:35 A.M. Communists launch surprise attack on Nha Trang, followed by attacks on two cities in I Corps and five cities in II Corps

- 9:45 A.M. Allies cancel Tet cease-fire throughout all of South Vietnam

- 11:25 A.M. MACV orders all U.S. units on "maximum alert."

January 31 -- (Vietnam time) 3 A.M. Simultaneous attacks on major cities, towns, military bases throughout South Vietnam. Major battles of Tet Offensive begin

- 2:47 A.M.-9:15 A.M. Battle of U.S. Embassy

- President Thieu declares martial law

- (P.M.) COSVN (Central Office for South Vietnam) Current Affairs Committee and Military Affairs Committee meet to assess Tet attacks

- (Night) Children and old people of Hanoi evacuated to countryside in preparation for anticipated U.S. bombing attacks

February 2 -- MACV reports lists 12,704 Communist troops killed in action since Tet began; U.S. battle deaths listed as 318 and those of South Vietnamese forces as 661 in same period

February 4 -- Fighting continues in Hue and around several major cities. MACV lists enemy losses at 15,595 killed in action; 415 U.S. and 905 ARVN listed killed

February 24-- South Vietnamese troops storm former Imperial Palace in Citadel of Hue; National Liberation Front flag torn down from Citadel flagpole and Republic of Vietnam flag run up

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DATA

Approved For Release 2004/12/22 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000100070001-9

SECRET

IN 49006

S E C R E T 110203Z CITE SAIGON 1826 [] ACTING}

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PRIORITY DIRECTOR

FOR []

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1. SO FAR, OUR MISSION FRUSTRATINGLY UNPRODUCTIVE SINCE MACV STONEWALLING, OBVIOUSLY UNDER ORDERS. UNLESS OR UNTIL I CAN PERSUADE WESTMORELAND TO AMEND THOSE ORDERS, SERIOUS DISCUSSION OF EVIDENCE OR SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE.

2. SINCE ROOT PROBLEMS, AS WE ALL RECOGNIZE, LIE MUCH MORE IN POLITICAL PUBLIC RELATIONS REALM THAN IN SUBSTANTIVE DIFFERENCE, I HAD HOPED TO GET SHARP, WESTMORELAND, KOMER AND BUNKER AGREEMENT ON PRESENTATIONAL PACKAGING QUESTION BEFORE ADDRESSING EVIDENCE AND SPECIFIC FIGURES. VARIETY OF CIRCUMSTANCES, HOWEVER, TORPEDOED THIS PLAN. [] ON 8 SEPTEMBER SHARP'S MORNING OBLIGATIONS

[] AND MY 1415 PLAN MADE 1300 - 1330 ONLY POSSIBLE TIME FOR OUR MEETING. AS SHARP COMING UP EMBASSY STAIRS, HE GRABBED BY HANNAH WHO, WHEN INFORMED SHARP GOING TO 1300 APPOINTMENT WITH [] WASHINGTON REPRESENTATIVE, STOOD STIFFLY ON HIS PREROGATIVES AS DCM AND SWEEP SHARP INTO HIS OFFICE. THUS I MISSED SHARP, THOUGH I WAS ABLE TO GIVE GIST OF [] POSITION TO ADMIRAL

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PAGE 2 SAIGON 1826 S E C R E T

READY. WHEN TEAM ARRIVED SAIGON 8 SEPTEMBER, WE LEARNED BOTH WESTMORELAND AND KOMER HAD TAKEN OFF FOR WEEKEND OF LEAVE IN, RESPECTIVELY, MANILA AND BANGKOK. THUS WORKING SESSIONS HAD TO COMMENCE WITHOUT CONTROLLING POLICY QUESTIONS RESOLVED.

3. ON 9 SEPTEMBER, MACV J2 AND STAFF DEVOTED WHOLE DAY TO BRIEFING US ON REVISED MACV ESTIMATE, WHICH WIDENED RATHER THAN NARROWED OUR DIFFERENCES. MACV NOW STICKING ON 119,000 MAIN AND LOCAL FORCE FIGURE, 29,000 ADMIN SERVICES, 65,000 GUERRILLAS AND 85,000 POLITICAL CADRE FOR (BY NO COINCIDENCE) MILITARY AND POLITICAL ~~OF~~ TOTAL OF 298,000. MACV ALSO ADAMANT THAT NO FIGURE OR QUANTIFIED ESTIMATE BE GIVEN FOR OTHER ELEMENTS VC ORGANIZATION SUCH AS SELF DEFENSE, SECRET SELF DEFENSE, ASSAULT YOUTH, ETC. {14.3 DRAFT FIGURES ARE 121,000 MAIN AND LOCAL FORCE, 40-60,000 RANGE ON ADMIN SERVICE, 60-100,000 RANGE ON GUERRILLAS, 90,000 ON POLITICAL CADRE, AND 120,000 FOR OTHERS.}

4. 10 SEPTEMBER DEVOTED TO SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF EVIDENCE AND METHODOLOGY ON ADMIN SERVICE AND GUERRILLAS. WE DID NOT ARGUE 2,000 DROP IN MAIN AND LOCAL FORCE (WHICH PROBABLY DEFENSIBLE) OR 5,000 DROP IN POLITICAL CADRE WHICH, AT THE MOMENT, WAS SECONDARY ISSUE. I ATTEMPTED TO CLEAR ATMOSPHERE BY OPENING SESSION WITH

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PAGE 3 SAIGON 1826 S E C R E T

STRONG PITCH FOR CAREFUL LOOK AT DATA CATEGORY BY CATEGORY, WITHOUT CONSIDERING ULTIMATE TOTAL UNTIL ANALYSIS EACH SEPARATE CATEGORY COMPLETED, AND BY OUTLINING HOW PRESENTATIONAL AND PUBLIC RELATIONS ISSUE COULD BE HANDLED IN FASHION BENEFICIAL TO MACV AND US GOVERNMENT CREDIBILITY WHEREVER WE COME OUT. I ALSO EXPLAINED, IN LOW KEY AND WITH ALL POSSIBLE TACT, THAT NATIONAL ESTIMATES WERE DCI ESTIMATES; THAT OTHER USIB MEMBERS COULD DISSENT, BUT NO ONE COULD TELL THE USIB CHAIRMAN WHAT HIS ESTIMATE HAD TO BE. MY REMARKS SEEMED WELL RECEIVED BUT HAD NO INFLUENCE ON THE BEHAVIOR OF GENERAL DAVIDSON OR HIS SUBORDINATES.

5. 14.3 CASE ON ADMIN SERVICE AND GUERRILLA FIGURES MOST ABLY PRESENTED BY MESSRS. ADAMS AND HYLAND. THOUGH TO DISCOMFITURE OF OUR HOSTS THIS CASE PATENTLY STRONGER THAN MACV'S, IT WAVED ASIDE BY GENERAL DAVIDSON. TWO EXAMPLES CONVEY THE PICTURE: ESTIMATE DRAFT FIGURES INCLUDE 17,000 ADMIN SERVICE AT DISTRICT LEVEL; MACV ONLY ACCEPTS 5,000. MR. ADAMS EXPLAINED HOW OUR DISTRICT LEVEL FIGURE DEVELOPED FROM ADMIN TO COMBAT TROOP RATIO EXTRAPOLATED FROM DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE COVERING 14 DISTRICTS. GENERAL DAVIDSON TORE INTO THIS, SAYING 14 DISTRICT BASE TOO SLIM FOR EXTRAPOLATION OF VALID NATIONWIDE FIGURE. SOON THEREAFTER,

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PAGE 4 SAIGON 1826 S E C R E T

HOWEVER, OFFICER WHO PRESENTED MACV CASE ON THIS POINT HAD TO ADMIT {IN RESPONSE DAVIDSON'S OWN QUESTIONS} THAT MACV 5,000 FIGURE BASED ON ONLY THREE DISTRICTS AND, EVEN HERE, MACV HAD MADE DOWNWARD ADJUSTMENT IN WHAT DOCUMENTS ACTUALLY SAID. NO MATTER, DAVIDSON WOULD NOT BUDGE. WHEN CHALLENGING MACV'S ADAMANT REFUSAL TO QUANTIFY ESTIMATE OF IRREGULARS {SELF DEFENSE, SECRET SELF DEFENSE}, WE POINTED OUT 14.3 DRAFT FIGURES TAKEN UNCHANGED FROM JULY 1967 MACV STUDY ON IRREGULARS. AGAIN, NO MATTER, NO GIVE. EVEN DIA TEAM MOST IRRITATED. AFTER SESSION, 25X1 GRUMBLED "WE DID NOT TRAVEL 8,000 MILES TO BE INSULTED."

6. VARIETY OF CIRCUMSTANTIAL INDICATORS -- MACV JUGGLING OF FIGURES ITS OWN ANALYSTS PRESENTED DURING AUGUST DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON, MACV BEHAVIOR, AND TACIT OR OBLIQUE LUNCHTIME AND CORRIDOR ADMISSIONS BY MACV OFFICERS, INCLUDING DAVIDSON -- ALL POINT TO INESCAPABLE CONCLUSION THAT GENERAL WESTMORELAND {WITH KOMER'S ENCOURAGEMENT} HAS GIVEN INSTRUCTION TANTAMOUNT TO DIRECT ORDER THAT VC STRENGTH TOTAL WILL NOT EXCEED 300,000 CEILING. RATIONALE SEEMS TO BE THAT ANY HIGHER FIGURE WOULD NOT BE SUFFICIENTLY OPTIMISTIC AND WOULD GENERATE UNACCEPTABLE LEVEL OF CRITICISM FROM THE PRESS. THIS ORDER OBVIOUSLY MAKES IT

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PAGE 5 SAIGON 1826 S E C R E T

IMPOSSIBLE FOR MACV TO ENGAGE IN SERIOUS OR MEANINGFUL DISCUSSION OF EVIDENCE OR OUR REAL SUBSTANTIVE DISAGREEMENTS, WHICH I STRONGLY SUSPECT ARE NEGLIGIBLE.

7. I HOPE TO SEE KOMER AND WESTMORELAND TOMORROW (11 SEPT) AND WILL ENDEAVOR TO LOOSEN THIS STRAITJACKET. UNLESS I CAN, WE ARE WASTING OUR TIME. TO SHOW, HOWEVER, THAT WE ARE WILLING TO GO EVEN BEYOND THE LAST MILE, MESSRS. HYLAND, [] AND ADAMS ARE GOING TO SIT DOWN WITH MACV'S WORKING LEVEL ANALYSTS AND REVIEW THE EVIDENCE ON ADMIN SERVICE, GUERRILLAS AND POLITICAL CADRE DOCUMENT BY DOCUMENT.

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8. FOR COSMETIC REASONS, GIVEN THE SITUATION AND THE FACT THAT KOMER AND WESTMORELAND WILL NOT ARRIVE UNTIL 11 SEPTEMBER, IT WOULD BE A POLITICAL ERROR FOR US TO LEAVE ON 12 SEPTEMBER AS PLANNED. THUS WE WILL HAVE TO REMAIN AN ADDITIONAL DAY OR TWO FOR APPEARANCES SAKE IF NOTHING ELSE. IF I CAN BUDGE WESTMORELAND, THIS WHOLE MATTER CAN BE RESOLVED TO EVERYONE'S SATISFACTION IN A FEW HOURS OF SERIOUS DISCUSSION. IF I CAN NOT, NO AGREEMENT IS POSSIBLE.

9. [] HAVE BOTH SEEN THIS MESSAGE. [] LEFT AFTERNOON 10 SEPTEMBER.

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SEP 11 1553Z
DIRECTOR 34454

S E C R E T

TO: PRIORITY SAIGON

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FOR

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

RE SAIG 1826 {IN-49006}, AGREE YOU SHOULD REMAIN UNTIL YOU
HAVE HAD SESSION WITH BOTH WESTMORELAND AND KOMER. PLEASE LET
ME KNOW OUTCOME, AND PLEASE CLEAR WITH ME YOUR DEPARTURE FROM
SAIGON. IN OTHER WORDS, TEAM SHOULD NOT REPEAT NOT LEAVE
FOR WASHINGTON UNTIL WE GIVE APPROVAL.

{END OF MESSAGE}

/S/
RICHARD HELMS
RELEASING OFFICER

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12 SEP 67 IN 50318

S E C R E T 121335Z CITE SAIGON 1926 [] ACTING}

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IMMEDIATE DIRECTOR

SECTION 1 OF 2

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FOR [] ONLY FROM []

(*Report from [] (2). 25X1
**[] asked that team not 25X1
depart for Washington without
his clearance.)

REFS: A. SAIGON 1826*{IN 49006}

B. DIRECTOR 34454**

C. SAIGON 1925 {IN 50294}

1. SEPTEMBER 11 AND 12 FULL OF ACTION AND BEHIND SCENES SCURRYING IN MACV, BUT HAVE PRODUCED LITTLE MOVEMENT. AT PRESENT, WE ARE AT AN IMPASSE. I HAVE SEEN KOMER ONCE AND AM HAVING DINNER WITH HIM TONIGHT. I SEE WESTMORELAND {WITH KOMER, DAVIDSON, THE DIA PRINCIPALS, AND MR. TEARE OF INR TOMORROW, 13 SEPTEMBER}. THIS MAY CLEAR THE AIR, BUT IT MAY LOCK US IN WHERE WE NOW ARE. I WILL SEE THE AMBASSADOR AFTER THE WESTMORELAND SESSION.

2. ON 11 SEPTEMBER, MESSRS. HYLAND, ADAMS, AND [] REVIEWED THE DETAILED EVIDENCE ON, RESPECTIVELY, ADMIN SERVICES, GUERRILLA AND POLITICAL CADRE. MR. ADAMS MANAGED TO GET MACV'S GUERRILLA FIGURES APPRECIABLY RAISED, MR.

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PAGE 2 SAIGON 1926 S E C R E T

HYLAND MADE NO CHANGES IN MACV'S ADMIN SERVICE HOLDINGS, BUT SAW IN DETAIL HOW WEAK THEIR CASE WAS {E.G., A DOCUMENT USED TO PROVIDE THE MODEL FOR ONE OF THE THREE DISTRICTS ON WHICH MACV'S DISTRICT-LEVEL CASE WAS BASED HAD A PARAGRAPH MACV DID NOT CITE, PROVIDING ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR MR. ADAMS' EXTRAPOLATED ADMIN TO COMBAT RATIO AT DISTRICT LEVEL}. MR. [] MADE NO CHANGES, BUT ON 11 SEPTEMBER OUR POSITIONS ON POLITICAL CADRE WERE VERY CLOSE.

3. ON 11 SEPTEMBER, GENERAL DAVIDSON AND I SPENT TWO HOURS WITH MR. KOMER, ACCOMPANIED BY GENERAL GODDING AND [] {DIA DELEGATION HEAD}. I REVIEWED THE HISTORY OF THE ESTIMATE, ITS VARIOUS DRAFTS, THE AUGUST WASHINGTON DISCUSSIONS {IN WHICH MACV'S REPRESENTATIVES HAD PARTICIPATED}, THE RATIONALE FOR THE FIGURES IN THE 28 AUGUST DRAFT, AND THE RESULTS OF OUR 10 SEPTEMBER CONFERENCE WITH THE MACV STAFF. WHILE COVERING THE LAST POINT, I WAS FREQUENTLY AND SOMETIMES TENDENTIOUSLY INTERRUPTED BY DAVIDSON, PARTICULARLY WHEN I STRESSED THAT OUR SUBSTANTIVE DIFFERENCES WERE PROBABLY NOT GREAT AND COULD SWIFTLY BE RESOLVED IF WE COULD PROCEED CATEGORY BY CATEGORY, WITHOUT

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PAGE 3 SAIGON 1926 S E C R E T

ANY WEATHER EYE ON A FINAL TOTAL. {DAVIDSON ANGRILY ACCUSED ME OF IMPUGNING HIS INTEGRITY SINCE HE HAD ASSURED ME HE HAD NO PRE-DETERMINED TOTAL.} I PRESENTED MY THOUGHTS ON THE PUBLIC RELATIONS PROBLEM, NOTING THAT A CLEARING OF THE ATMOSPHERE, NO MATTER HOW MUCH SHORT TERM STATIC PRODUCED, WOULD BENEFIT OUR CREDIBILITY POSTURE, THAT IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO ESTABLISH A VALID BASE LINE WE WOULD NEVER ^{HAVE TO} RETROACTIVELY ^{25X1} ADJUST UPWARD, AND THAT IF MACV WENT TO THE PRESS WITH THE LINE ^{THAT} ~~THAT~~ AFTER AN EXHAUSTIVE REVIEW OF ALL ITS EVIDENCE AND METHODOLOGY, IT CAME OUT WITH A MILITARY PLUS POLITICAL TOTAL OF {BY STRANGE COINCIDENCE} 298,000, IT REALLY WOULD BE CRUCIFIED.

4. KOMER THEN LAUNCHED INTO AN HOUR-PLUS MONOLOGUE, REVIEWING HIS AND WESTMORELAND'S PROBLEMS WITH THE PRESS, THEIR FRUSTRATING INABILITY TO CONVINCe THE PRESS {HENCE THE PUBLIC} OF THE GREAT PROGRESS BEING MADE, AND THE PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE OF SAYING NOTHING THAT WOULD DETRACT FROM THE IMAGE OF PROGRESS OR SUPPORT OF THE THESIS OF STALEMATE. HE THEN OPENED A STRONG ATTACK ON THE ESTIMATE DRAFT, FAULTING THE QUALITY OF ITS PROSE AND ITS ANALYSIS AND CALLING IT A SLOPPY,

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PAGE 4 SAIGON 1926 S E C R E T

THIN AND ALTOGETHER DISAPPOINTING PIECE OF WORK, OUT OF DATE WHERE IT WAS NOT ACTUALLY WRONG. HE NOTED THAT OCI AND ONE HAD ONLY A SMALL NUMBER OF ANALYSTS WORKING ON VIETNAM, NONE OF WHOM KNEW MUCH ABOUT IT. THE AGENCY'S ANALYSIS, CONSEQUENTLY, COULD NOT EXPECT TO COMPARE IN DEPTH AND QUALITY TO THAT OF MACV, WITH ITS BATTERIES OF SPECIALISTS. HE HAD MUCH MORE FAITH IN MACV'S FIGURES THAN OURS (THOUGH WE THOUGHT MACV'S TOO HIGH) AND WOULD HENCE RECOMMEND TO WESTMORELAND

THAT OURS BE REJECTED. HE DID SAY, HOWEVER, THAT HE AGREED THAT THE 298,000 TOTAL HAD TO BE CHANGED (FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS REASONS) AND AGREED WITH ME THAT THE FINAL ESTIMATE SHOULD SHOW RANGES RATHER THAN SINGLE FIGURES. HE WAS ADAMANT, HOWEVER, IN INSISTING THAT THEIRS MUST NOT BE ANY QUANTIFICATION OF THE IRREGULAR FORCES ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE PRESS WOULD ADD ALL FIGURES, TOGETHER AND HENCE QUANTIFYING THE IRREGULARS WOULD PRODUCE A POLITICALLY UNACCEPTABLE TOTAL OVER 400,000.

5. THE ATMOSPHERE CHANGED MARKEDLY AFTER THE KOMER SESSION. DAVIDSON ^{CHORTLED} ~~CHORTED~~ HIS DELIGHT AT SCUTTLING THE 298,000 TOTAL. HE SAID HE WOULD HAVE GENERAL GODDING WORK OUT THE SPREADS. I SUGGESTED WE DEVELOP THE SPREADS TOGETHER, CATEGORY

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PAGE 5 SAIGON 1926 S E C R E T

BY CATEGORY, BUT DAVIDSON DEMURRED. SHORTLY BEFORE WE LEFT, HOWEVER, DAVIDSON'S DEPUTY SIDLED UP TO MR. HYLAND TO ASK "HOW WOULD YOU GET TO 309,000, SHOW ME AND YOU'LL HAVE A PROPOSITION."

6. WHEN WE WENT TO MACV ON 12 SEPTEMBER GENERAL DAVIDSON AND GENERAL GODDING HANDED ME A WHITE CARD WITH THE FOLLOWING TYPED THEREON: QUOTE MAIN AND LOCALS 119,000, ADM SVC 25,000 - 35,000, GUERRILLAS 75,000 - 95,000, TOTAL 219,000 - 249,000 {MEAN 234,000}, POLITICAL CADRE 70,000 - 80,000 - SELF DEFENSE AND SECRET SELF DEFENSE, NO QUANTIFICATION. OPTIMISTIC ATMOSPHERE IN NIE. UNQUOTE.

7. I SUGGESTED WE GET OUR ANALYSTS TOGETHER AND REVIEW THE SPREADS CATEGORY BY CATEGORY. DAVIDSON REFUSED, SAYING THAT WAS MACV'S FINAL OFFER, NOT SUBJECT TO DISCUSSION. WE SHOULD TAKE OR LEAVE IT.

8. I THEN CONVENED THE ENTIRE WASHINGTON DELEGATION TO SEE IF WE COULD HAMMER OUT A POSITION DIA AND INR WOULD JOIN US IN. IT TOOK SIX HOURS, BUT WE SUCCEEDED. I THEN WROTE OUR POSITION OUT AS A FORMAL MEMORANDUM {TEXT IN REF C} WHICH I PRESENTED TO GENERAL DAVIDSON AT 1800 HOURS.

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12 SEPT 67 IN 50318

S E C R E T 121335 CITE SAIGON 1926 [] ACTING}

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IMMEDIATE DIRECTOR

FINAL SECTION OF TWO

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FOR [] ONLY FROM []

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PAGE 6 SAIGON 1926 S E C R E T

9. YOU WILL NOTE I HAVE MADE A MAJOR CONCESSION IN NOT QUANTIFYING THE IRREGULARS. IT SEEMED TO ME THIS WAS MACV'S MAJOR STICKING POINT, THAT OUR FIGURES WERE NOT ALL THAT FIRM, AND THAT THE PROSE TEXT ADOPTED MAKES IT CLEAR THAT WE HAVE THE HUNDRED THOUSAND RANGE IN MIND EVEN THOUGH NO PRECISE FIGURE IS USED.

10. FOR THE REST, WE BUY MACV'S POSITION ON MAIN AND LOCAL FORCE AND THEIR NEW POSITION {COURTESY OF MR. ADAMS} ON GUERRILLAS. WE ARE STICKING ON THE POLITICAL CADRE FIGURE EVERYONE HAD AGREED TO {IT IS IN A 1 SEPTEMBER MACV STUDY} UNTIL TODAY, WHEN MACV WHACKED IT JUST TO GET THE TOTAL DOWN. ON ADMIN SERVICES, I AND MY COLLEAGUES BELIEVE WE HAVE GIVEN ALL THE GROUND WE CAN WITHOUT VIOLATING OUR PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY.

11. AFTER READING MY MEMORANDUM, DAVIDSON SAID THIS CLOSED THE ISSUE. MACV HAD MADE ITS FINAL OFFER AND THERE WOULD BE TWO SETS OF FIGURES. I SAID THERE HAD TO BE SOME FURTHER DISCUSSION SINCE I WAS UNDER YOUR INSTRUCTIONS TO DISCUSS THIS WHOLE SUBJECT PERSONALLY WITH GENERAL WESTMORELAND. AS NOTED ABOVE, THE WESTMORELAND SESSION IS NOW SCHEDULED FOR 0830 TOMORROW {13 SEPTEMBER}. IF HE

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PAGE 7 SAIGON 1926 S E C R E T

REFUSES TO REMOVE THE STRICTURE OF A PRE-DETERMINED TOTAL,
FIXED ON PUBLIC RELATIONS GROUNDS, WE CAN GO NO FURTHER
{UNLESS YOU INSTRUCT OTHERWISE}. IF HE LIFTS THIS STRICTURE,
MACV'S ANALYSTS ARE DYING TO HAVE OUR REVISED FIGURES
ACCEPTED.

12. I WILL REPORT TOMORROW ON THE KOMER DINNER
AND WESTMORELAND MEETING, AND WOULD WELCOME HEADQUARTERS
COMMENTS AND GUIDANCE BEFORE THE LATTER. WE HAVE
RESERVATIONS FOR THURSDAY, 14 SEPTEMBER {PUTTING US IN
WASHINGTON 17 SEPTEMBER}, BUT WILL NOT LEAVE WITHOUT YOUR
EXPLICIT AUTHORIZATION PER REFERENCE B.

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SERVICE

SAIGON 1926 PARA 3
STA & NR

12 SEP 67
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IN NR

PLEASE CORRECT THE GARBLED PORTION(S) OF THIS MESSAGE TO
READ AS FOLLOWS:

"WE WOULD NEVER HAVE TO RETROACTIVELY ADJUST UPWARD AND THAT"

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12 SEP 67 IN 50294

S E C R E T 121215Z CITE SAIGON 1925 ACTING}

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IMMEDIATE DIRECTOR

SECTION 1 OF 2

FOR MR. HELMS ONLY FROM MR. CARVER

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REF: SAIGON 1926

BEGIN TEXT

"SUBJECT: JOINT CIA-DIA-INR REPRESENTATIVES' POSITION ON
VIET CONG STRENGTH ESTIMATES"

"AFTER REVIEWING THE EVIDENCE, METHODOLOGY AND WASHINGTON
DISCUSSIONS WHICH LED TO THE LANGUAGE OF THE 28 AUGUST DRAFT
OF NIE 14.3-67 IN LIGHT OF OUR SAIGON DISCUSSIONS WITH THE STAFF
OF COMUSMACV, THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE
AGENCY, DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY AND BUREAU OF INTELLIGENCE
AND RESEARCH OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE JOINTLY BELIEVE THE
FOLLOWING FIGURES AND DEFINITIONS, WHICH MODIFY THOSE NOW APPEARING
IN THE DRAFT NIE, WOULD BE ACCEPTED BY THEIR RESPECTIVE WASHINGTON
PRINCIPALS:

VIET CONG MILITARY FORCE

MAIN AND LOCAL FORCES: 119,000 - {119,000}

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PAGE 2 SAIGON 1925 S E C R E T

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

GUERRILLAS

35,000 - 45,000

TOTAL

75,000 - 95,000

229,000 - 259,000

"WE ESTIMATE THAT THE PRESENT STRENGTH OF THE VIET CONG POLITICAL CADRE STRUCTURE IS IN THE 80,000 TO 90,000 RANGE.

"THE NIE WOULD HAVE NO AGGREGATE TOTAL OF THE VIET CONG MILITARY FORCE AND THE VIET CONG POLITICAL CADRE STRUCTURE SINCE WE BELIEVE SUCH AN AGGREGATE TOTAL IS INHERENTLY MEANINGLESS AND MISLEADING.

"ON THE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES, THE FIGURE NOTED ABOVE WOULD BE PRESENTED IN AN EXPLANATORY PARAGRAPH A DRAFT COPY OF WHICH IS ATTACHED HERETO.

"THERE WOULD BE NO NUMERICAL ESTIMATE ON THE SIZE AND STRENGTH OF THE SELF DEFENSE, SECRET SELF-DEFENSE, AND OTHER SIMILAR VC ORGANIZATIONS. INSTEAD, THESE WOULD BE TEXTUALLY EXPLAINED AS INDICATED IN DRAFT PARAGRAPHS WHICH ALSO ARE ATTACHED TO THIS MEMORANDUM.

"IN CONNECTION WITH THESE "IRREGULAR" ORGANIZATIONS {AS INDICATED IN MY CONVERSATIONS WITH GENERAL DAVIDSON}, WE WOULD LIKE TO INITIATE A JOINT WASHINGTON - SAIGON EFFORT TO DEVELOP

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PAGE 3 SAIGON 1925 S E C R E T

A METHODOLOGY TO INSURE THAT LOSSES INCURRED BY THESE IRREGULARS DO NOT DISTORT OUR INPUT - LOSS CALCULATIONS APPLIED TO DETERMINING ATTRITION ON OR THE FUTURE STRENGTHS OF THE VC MILITARY FORCE AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE.

"WITH REGARD TO INPUT - LOSS CALCULATING, WE WOULD VERY MUCH APPRECIATE RECEIVING A COPY OF LT. COL. GRAHAM'S 'CROSSOVER' BRIEFING AND HAVING AN OPPORTUNITY TO SEND YOU OUR CONSIDERED COMMENTS ON THIS VERY INTERESTING PRESENTATION BEFORE ITS ARGUMENT OR CONCLUSIONS ARE SURFACED OUTSIDE OF OFFICIAL CHANNELS. WE WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE COPIES OF THE BRIEFING WE RECEIVED ON CURRENT RECRUITMENT RATES AND MAJOR REID'S EXCELLENT BRIEFING ON VC MORALE.

"WITH REGARD TO THE FORTHCOMING NIE, ANY TEXT COMUSMACV WISHES TO SUBMIT TO MODIFY PARAGRAPHS IN THE PRESENT DRAFT OR ANY COMUSMACV SUGGESTION FOR ADDITIONAL PARAGRAPHS WILL BE TAKEN BACK TO WASHINGTON FOR CAREFUL CONSIDERATION BY THE INTER-AGENCY COORDINATING PROCESS THROUGH WHICH NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES ARE PRODUCED. GEORGE A. CARVER, JR, SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE"

BEGIN TEXT ATTACHMENT 1

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PAGE 4 SAIGON 1925 S E C R E T

"TO FOLLOW THE PARAGRAPH DEFINING ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE FORCES AND EXPLAINING THAT WE CANNOT ESTIMATE THE PERSONNEL IN CAMBODIA, LAOS AND ACROSS THE DMZ:"

"26. WE CANNOT BE CONFIDENT OF THE TOTAL SIZE OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE FORCES AT ANY GIVEN TIME. OBVIOUSLY, THEIR STRENGTH SHOULD STAND IN SOME RATIO TO THE COMBAT FORCES THEY SUPPORT. INFORMATION ON THE CURRENT STRENGTH OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AT THE LOWER LEVELS IS INSUFFICIENT TO ESTABLISH A FIRM ESTIMATE. MOREOVER, THIS FORCE HAS ALMOST CERTAINLY SUFFERED ATTRITION AND HAS PROBABLY BEEN DRAWN DOWN TO PROVIDE SOME COMBAT REPLACEMENTS. IN LIGHT OF THESE CONSIDERATIONS, WE ESTIMATE THAT THERE ARE NOW ABOUT 35,000-45,000 ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE PERSONNEL WHO ARE PERFORMING ESSENTIAL ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT FUNCTIONS, FULL TIME. IN ADDITION, HOWEVER, THERE ARE SEVERAL THOUSANDS WHO ARE ASSIGNED MARGINAL FUNCTIONS, NOT NECESSARILY FULL TIME. AND, OF COURSE, ALMOST ANYONE UNDER VC CONTROL CAN BE AND IS IMPRESSED INTO SERVICE TO PERFORM SPECIFIC ADMINISTRATIVE OR SUPPORT TASKS WHEN LOCAL CONDITIONS REQUIRE HIS SERVICES." END TEXT ATTACHMENT 1

BEGIN TEXT ATTACHMENT 2

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PAGE 5 SAIGON 1925 S E C R E T

"OTHER COMMUNIST ELEMENTS:"

"THE COMMUNISTS MAKE A DELIBERATE EFFORT TO ORGANIZE MOST OF THE PEOPLE UNDER THEIR CONTROL INTO VARIOUS WORK FORCES AND SEMI-MILITARY ORGANIZATIONS, AND WHEN OCCASION DEMANDS, ALMOST EVERY ABLE-BODIED PERSON UNDER VC CONTROL MAY BE CALLED ON TO SUPPORT THE WAR EFFORT. AMONG THE MORE SIGNIFICANT ORGANIZATIONS "ARE THE SELF-DEFENSE FORCES, SECRET SELF-DEFENSE FORCES AND OTHER GROUPS SUCH AS THE "ASSAULT YOUTH". THE SD IS REGULARLY REPORTED AND PORTRAYED BY THE COMMUNISTS AS A MILITARY ORGANIZATION SIMILAR TO VILLAGE AND HAMLET GUERRILLAS, BUT IT IS CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT THEIR ORGANIZATION AND MISSION DIFFER. THEY INCLUDE PERSONNEL OF ALL AGES, A HIGH PERCENTAGE OF FEMALES, ELDERLY PERSONS, AND CHILDREN. THEY ARE LARGELY UNARMED AND ONLY PARTIALLY TRAINED. THE DUTIES OF SELF-DEFENSE UNITS INCLUDE THE MAINTENANCE OF LAW AND ORDER, AND PROTECTION OF VILLAGES AND HAMLETS IN ENEMY-CONTROLLED TERRITORY. THE CONSTRUCTION OF FORTIFICATIONS, PROPAGANDA AND INTELLIGENCE WORK. THEIR EXISTENCE POSES AN IMPEDIMENT PARTICULARLY TO THE ALLIED PACIFICATION EFFORTS. SELF DEFENSE FORCES DO NOT LEAVE THEIR HOME AREAS, AND MEMBERS GENERALLY PERFORM THEIR DUTIES ON A PART-TIME BASIS. IN THEIR DEFENSIVE

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IN 50294

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FOR MR. HELMS ONLY FROM MR. CARVER

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[]
ROLE, THEY INFLICT CASUALTIES ON ALLIED FORCES.

"SECRET SELF-DEFENSE FORCES ARE AN ADDITIONAL ELEMENT WHICH OPERATE IN GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED AND CONTESTED AREAS. THEY PROVIDE SUPPORT TO THE COMMUNIST EFFORT, PRIMARILY BY CLANDESTINE INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES AND AS A RESIDUE OF THE COMMUNIST PRESENCE IN SUCH AREAS.

"DURING THE PAST YEAR WE HAVE LEARNED MORE ABOUT A VC ORGANIZATION CALLED 'ASSAULT YOUTH'. THEY SERVE FULL-TIME AT DISTRICT LEVEL AND ABOVE, AND THEY ARE ORGANIZED INTO BATTALIONS, COMPANIES, AND PLATOONS. ALTHOUGH SOME ARE ARMED, THE COMMUNISTS DO NOT CONSIDER THEM AS A COMBAT FORCE; THEIR PRIMARY MISSION APPEARS TO BE A LOGISTICAL ONE, FREQUENTLY IN BATTLEFIELD AREAS. SOME OF THE CASUALTIES INFLICTED BY ALLIED FORCES IN BATTLE ARE SUSTAINED BY THE 'ASSAULT YOUTH'. THIS ORGANIZATION ALSO SERVES AS A MANPOWER POOL AND TRAINING PROGRAM FOR YOUTH WHO LATER GO

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PAGE 2 SAIGON 1925 S E C R E T

INTO THE VC MAIN AND LOCAL FORCES. LITTLE INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE TO INDICATE THE STRENGTH OF DISTRIBUTION OF THE 'ASSAULT YOUTH.'

"OUR CURRENT EVIDENCE DOES NOT ENABLE US TO ESTIMATE THE PRESENT SIZE OF THESE GROUPS WITH ANY MEASURE OF CONFIDENCE. SOME DOCUMENTS SUGGEST THAT IN EARLY 1966 THE AGGREGATE SIZE OF THE SELF DEFENSE GROUP WAS THEN ON THE ORDER OF 150,000. THESE 'IRREGULAR' COMPONENTS, HOWEVER, HAVE UNQUESTIONABLY SUFFERED ATTRITION SINCE THAT TIME, AS WELL AS AN APPRECIABLE DECLINE IN QUALITY, BECAUSE OF CASUALTIES, UPGRADING OF SOME OF THEIR MEMBERS INTO THE GUERRILLAS OR OTHER VC MILITARY COMPONENTS AND, PARTICULARLY, THE SHRINKAGE IN VC CONTROL OF POPULATED AREAS. THOUGH IN AGGREGATE NUMBERS THESE GROUPS ARE STILL LARGE, AND THEY STILL CONSTITUTE A PART OF THE OVERALL COMMUNIST EFFORT, THEY ARE NOT OFFENSIVE MILITARY FORCES AND SHOULD NOT BE INCLUDED IN THE MILITARY ORDER OF BATTLE TOTAL, EVEN THOUGH SOME OF THEIR MEMBERS ARE PROBABLY INCLUDED IN OUR CASUALTY FIGURES AND THEY ACCOUNT FOR A SMALL PERCENTAGE OF THE CHIEU HOIS." END TEXT
ATTACHMENT 2.

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~~SECRET~~

13 SEP 67 IN 51159

S E C R E T 131225Z CITE SAIGON 1983 [] ACTING}

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IMMEDIATE DIRECTOR

SECTION 1 OF 2

FOR [] ONLY FROM []

(*Messages to [] concerning the VC strength estimates.)

25X1

REF: A. SAIGON 1925* {IN 50294}

B. SAIGON 1926* {IN 50318}

1. CIRCLE NOW SQUARED, CHIEFLY AS RESULT OF WESTMORELAND SESSION {AND PERHAPS KOMER DINNER}. WE NOW HAVE AGREED SET OF FIGURES WESTMORELAND ENDORSES. MISSION SEEMS ON VERGE OF SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION, THOUGH FINAL T'S TO BE CROSSED TOMORROW.

2. KOMER DINNER WAS RELAXED, FRANK, CORDIAL AND {MOST USEFULLY} PRIVATE. WE REVIEWED WHOLE ESTIMATE EXERCISE. I GAVE BLUNT OUTLINE OF WEAKNESSES IN MACV CASE, OF PECULIAR MACV BEHAVIOR, AND OF FACT THAT AGREEMENT IMPOSSIBLE UNLESS CLIMATE IMPROVED ENOUGH TO PERMIT SERIOUS DISCUSSION. KOMER DID NOT AGREE WITH OUR SUBSTANTIVE POSITION AND REPEATED SOME CAUSTIC REMARKS ABOUT THE ESTIMATE BUT HE DID LISTEN.

3. ON MORNING 13 SEPTEMBER, GENERAL DAVIDSON ADVISED ME WESTMORELAND MEETING WOULD DO NOTHING BUT FORMALIZE OUR IMPASSE.

~~SECRET~~

SECRET

PAGE 2 SAIGON 1988 S E C R E T

SINCE WESTMORELAND WOULD NEVER ACCEPT OUR POSITION. WHEN MEETING CONVENED {WITH ABRAMS, KOMER, GENERAL SIDLE {PIO} AND INR REPS ATTENDING}. DAVIDSON GAVE RATHER BIASED ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS, NOTING OUR IMPASSE ON FIGURES, SAYING HE THOUGHT OUR PARAGRAPH WRITTEN TO AVOID QUANTIFYING IRREGULARS {LAST PARA REF A} UNACCEPTABLE AND OUTLINING HIS DRAFT CABLE BY WHICH GENERAL WESTMORELAND COULD ADVISE GENERAL WHEELER OF OUR INABILITY TO AGREE. KOMER WEIGHED IN WITH REPLAY OF HIS THESIS, RECOMMENDING ACCEPTANCE MACV POSITION BUT ACKNOWLEDGING LOGIC IN SOME OF WASHINGTON VIEWS. I THEN REVIEWED HISTORY AND CONTEXT WHOLE ESTIMATE, THE SAIGON DISCUSSIONS, AND THE RATIONALE BEHIND EACH OF THE JOINT WASHINGTON REPRESENTATIVES FIGURES, AND {AS TACTFULLY AS POSSIBLE} THE WAY THE PROCEDURE THROUGH WHICH NATIONAL ESTIMATES PRODUCED REDUCED OUR NEGOTIATING LATITUDE. I ALSO TOOK UP "QUANTIFICATION PARAGRAPH", INDICATING THAT DAVIDSON HAD QUOTED OUT OF CONTEXT AND SHOWING WHY WE THOUGHT IT MET BOTH WASHINGTON AND MACV NEEDS. I CONCLUDED WITH GENERAL REMARKS TRACING HISTORY OF U.S. MILITARY ESTIMATES ON VIETNAM SINCE 1956, NOTING THAT CONSISTENT RECORD OF UNDERESTIMATION PLUS RECENT {I.E. MCCHRISTIAN} METHODOLOGY WHICH REQUIRED CONSTANT RETROACTIVE JUGGLING HAD CONTRIBUTED MIGHTILY TO OUR

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PAGE 3 SAIGON 1988 S E C R E T

CREDIBILITY PROBLEMS, THAT WE NEEDED BASELINE WHICH WOULD NOT HAVE TO BE ADJUSTED AGAIN, AND THAT WHEN IN DOUBT WE WERE ADVISED, FROM ALL ANGLES, TO ERR ON SIDE OF CAUTION RATHER THAN OPTIMISM.

4. WESTMORELAND MOST CORDIAL AND RECEPTIVE. SAID HE AGREED WITH MOST OF MY OBSERVATIONS AND COULD SEE THE CLEAR LOGIC BEHIND BOTH SETS OF FIGURES, WHICH WERE REALLY NOT THAT FAR APART. HE ALSO SAW THE RATIONALE BEHIND OUR "IRREGULAR QUANTIFICATION" PARAGRAPH AND HAD NO PROBLEMS WITH IT, THOUGH HE WOULD WANT TO TAKE A FINAL LOOK AT IT IN WRITING. HE ASKED IF I WOULD CONVENE BOTH THE WASHINGTON AND MACV ANALYSTS TO REVIEW THE EVIDENCE ONCE AGAIN AND SEE IF WE COULD RESOLVE OUR DIFFERENCES.

5. WHEN THE ANALYST MEETING WAS CONVENED (WITH DAVIDSON REPRESENTED BY HIS DEPUTY) I TOOK WESTMORELAND AT HIS WORD, USURPED THE CHAIR, AND ANNOUNCED THAT ALL CONSTRAINTS ON TOTALS WERE OFF AND WE COULD SETTLE DOWN TO SERIOUS DISCUSSION OF EVIDENCE AND ISSUES. DURING ABOUT FOUR HOURS OF BRISK DISCUSSION WE HAMMERED OUT THE FOLLOWING SET OF AGREED FIGURES, WHICH GENERAL WESTMORELAND HAS ALREADY ENDORSED: MAIN AND LOCAL FORCE 119,000, ADMIN SERVICES 35,000-40,000, GUERRILLAS 70,000-90,000 FOR MILITARY TOTAL SPREAD OF 224,000-249,000. POLITICAL 75,000 TO 85,000,

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PAGE 4 SAIGON 1988 S E C R E T

6. ON THE WHOLE, I THINK WE CAN LIVE QUITE COMFORTABLY WITH THE ABOVE FIGURES {WHICH THE DIA TEAM AND INR REP ENDORSE}. WE HAVE NO DISPUTE ON THE MAIN AND LOCAL FORCE 119,000 FIGURE. THE TEXT OF THE OPERATIVE SENTENCE IN OUR ADMIN SERVICE PARAGRAPH {SEE REF A} NOW READS "IN LIGHT OF THESE CONSIDERATIONS, WE ESTIMATE THAT THERE ARE NOW AT LEAST 35,000-40,000 ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE PERSONNEL WHO ARE PERFORMING ESSENTIAL ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT FUNCTIONS FULL TIME." THE REST OF THE PARAGRAPH IS UNCHANGED. WE GAVE A LITTLE COSMETICALLY BUT I THINK THIS PRESERVES THE ESSENCE OF THE JUDGMENT IN THE 14.3 DRAFT.

7. THERE HAS BEEN SOME ADJUSTMENT ON GUERRILLAS, BUT THE NEW FIGURE {70,000-90,000} APPRECIABLY LIFTS MACV'S PREVIOUS TOTAL {65,000} AND HAS THE SAME MEDIAN {80,000} AS THE SPREAD IN THE 14.3 DRAFT.

8. WE GAVE A LITTLE ON THE POLITICAL FIGURE, PARTLY TO KEEP MACV ON THE RESERVATION WITH RESPECT TO THE GUERRILLAS, PARTLY BECAUSE MACV DID HAVE A CASE ON DOUBLE COUNTING {SOME BODIES IN BOTH MILITARY AND POLITICAL FIGURES, THOUGH THIS WAS NOT THE REASON MACV WHACKED THE FIGURE YESTERDAY}, AND PRIMARILY BECAUSE

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PAGE 5 SAIGON 1988 S E C R E T

THE DISCUSSION AND EVIDENCE CONVINCED ME THAT THIS IS NOT A VERY GOOD FIGURE ANYWAY. OUR PRESENT DEFINITIONS ARE NOT ADEQUATE OR SUFFICIENTLY PRECISE, WE INCLUDE MUCH MORE THAN THE REAL "LEADERSHIP" AND EXCLUDE MANY {E.G. SECURITY ELEMENTS} OF WHOM FORMAL COGNIZANCE SHOULD BE TAKEN.

9. ON ABOVE, WITH ENDORSEMENT MESSRS. HYLAND AND [REDACTED] AND DIA REPS AND CONCURRENCE GENERAL DAVIDSON, I AM INITIATING MAJOR STUDY TO REFINE OUR POLITICAL CATEGORIES AND HENCE IMPROVE OUR POLITICAL HOLDINGS. TO THIS END, MR. ADAMS WILL REMAIN SAIGON TO GO OVER WHOLE SUBJECT IN DETAIL WITH MACV ANALYSTS AND OUR ICEX OFFICERS. FURTHER WORK WILL THEN BE CARRIED ON IN WASHINGTON UNDER [REDACTED] AEGIS.

10. OUR AGREED FIGURES AND IRREGULAR QUANTIFICATION PARAGRAPH BEING GIVEN GENERAL WESTMORELAND IN WRITING TOMORROW. ONCE HE ADDS SIGNATURE TO ALREADY EXPRESSED VERBAL APPROVAL OUR MISSION SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED. I HAVE 1500 HOURS APPOINTMENT WITH AMBASSADOR BUNKER ON 14 SEPTEMBER AND SHALL GIVE HIM FULL REPORT.

11. GENERAL WESTMORELAND HAS REQUESTED I WORK WITH GENERAL DAVIDSON AND GENERAL SIDLE TO PREPARE SCENARIO FOR

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~~SECRET~~

13 SEP 67 IN 51159

S E C R E T 131225Z CITE SAIGON 1988 [] ACTING}

25X1

IMMEDIATE DIRECTOR

FINAL SECTION OF 2

FOR [] ONLY FROM []

[]

PRESS BACKGROUNDER. I HAVE ACCEPTED SUBJECT YOUR CONCURRENCE.
PLEASE ADVISE.

12. ON RETURNS, EARLY RESERVATIONS OUT OF SIAGON ALMOST
IMPOSSIBLE OBTAIN. SUBJECT YOUR APPROVAL {PLEASE ADVISE
IMMEDIATE} I HAVE AUTHORIZED MESSRS. [] AND HYLAND USE
THEIR PRESENT 14 SEPTEMBER PANAM RESERVATIONS. I HAVE RESERVA-
TION FOR 16 SEPTEMBER BUT WILL NOT LEAVE UNTIL YOU CONCUR.
REQUEST OUR WIVES BE ADVISED OF THESE TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS.

25X1

S E C R E T

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SECRET

SEP 13 1530Z
DIR 35114

S E C R E T

TO: OPERATIONAL IMMEDIATE SAIGON

25X1
25X1

FOR [] FROM []

[]

RE SAIGON 1988 {IN 51159}, PARAGRAPH 12.*

WHOLE TEAM AUTHORIZED RETURN ANY TIME FROM NOW ON. IF YOU WANT
TO WAIT UNTIL 16 SEPTEMBER, THAT IS ENTIRELY UP TO YOU. WIVES
WILL BE ADVISE.

{END OF MESSAGE}

25X1
25X1

C/S Comment: *Messrs. [] and Hyland have reservations leave 14
September. [] (1) has reservation for 16 September,
but will not leave until [] concurs. 25X1

/S/
RICHARD HELMS
RELEASING OFFICER

SECRET

SECRET

SEP 13 1554Z
DIRECTOR 35119

IMMEDIATE
TO: SAIGON

25X1

[] FROM []

25X1

[]

RE SAIGON 1988 {IN 51159}, REGARDING PARAGRAPH 11. *

1. HAVE NO OBJECTION TO YOUR UNDERTAKING WHAT GENERAL WESTMORELAND ASKS, BUT DO NOT REPEAT NOT FEEL THAT SUCH PRESS BACKGROUNDS SHOULD BE RELATED IN ANY WAY TO NIE PROCESS. WILL MAKE DETERMINATION ONLY AFTER YOU RETURN HERE WHETHER OR NOT ESTIMATE WILL BE ISSUED.

2. PLEASE DO NOT REPEAT NOT OVER READ OR MISREAD WHAT I HAVE SAID ABOVE.

{END OF MESSAGE}

C/S Comment: *General Westmoreland requested [] (1) work with General Davidson and General Sidle to prepare scenario for press backgrounder. 25X1

/S/
RICHARD HELSM
RELEASING OFFICER

SECRET

SECRET

14 SEP 67 IN 52200

S E C R E T 141153Z CITE SAIGON 2043 [] ACTG}

25X1

PRIORITY DIRECTOR

25X1

[]

25X1

FOR [] ONLY FROM []

1. GEN. WESTMORELAND HAS FORMALLY SIGNED
OFF ON AGREED FIGURES AND IRREGULAR QUANTIFICATION
PARAGRAPH. UNDERSTAND HE HAS FORMALLY REPORTED
TO CHAIRMAN JCS THAT AGREEMENT ON FIGURES
WAS REACHED AND HE HAS ENDORSED RESULT. THUS
OUR BASIC MISSION NOW SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED.

2. I HAD GOOD SESSION WITH AMBASSADOR
BUNKER, REPORTING OUR AGREEMENT WITH MACV
AND OUTLINING SALIENT ELEMENTS OF
THE DISCUSSIONS BUT OMITTING DETAILS NOW
BETTER FORGOTTEN. HE REVIEWED AGREED FIGURES
AND DRAFT PARAGRAPHS AND ENDORSED THEM WITHOUT
RESERVATION. AMBASSADOR MOST PLEASED THAT
WASHINGTON AND SAIGON COULD NOW SPEAK
WITH ONE VOICE, WAS VERY COMPLIMENTARY
ABOUT WASHINGTON DELEGATION MISSION AND SAID
WESTMORELAND HAD ALREADY PHONED HIM TO

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PAGE 2 SAIGON 2043 S E C R E T

RELAY SIMILAR VIEWS.

3. AT BUNKER REQUEST, WE THEN ENGAGED IN NOTE AND IMPRESSION COMPARING DISCUSSION OF CURRENT POLITICAL SCENE, PARTICULARLY KY-THIEU RELATIONSHIP. AMBASSADOR HAD HIGH PRAISE FOR STATION AND SUPPORT IT GIVES HIM. HE MADE PARTICULAR POINT OF PRAISING [] PERFORMANCE AND PROFESSIONALISM, IN WHICH BUNKER OBVIOUSLY HAS GREAT CONFIDENCE.

4. AFTER BUNKER SESSION, I SPENT TWO HOURS WITH GEN. SIDLE, MACV PIO, DISCUSSING SCENARIO FOR PRESS BACKGROUNDER ON NEW FIGURES. MACV, PRESENTATION WILL MAKE NO MENTION WHATSOEVER OF NIE.

5. ONLY REMAINING TASK IS MENDING OF PERSONAL FENCES WITH GEN. DAVIDSON. HE IS ABLE OFFICER WITH WHOM STATION MUST DEAL CLOSELY AND WITH WHOM WE

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 3 SAIGON 2043 S E C R E T
IN WASHINGTON SHOULD MAINTAIN RECIPROCALLY
USEFUL COMMUNICATION. DAVIDSON AND I MEETING FOR
DRINKS ON 15 SEPTEMBER.

6. EARLIEST AVAILABLE RESERVATION IS
PAN AM 2 ON 16 SEPTEMBER. WILL STOP
AT HONOLULU TO BRIEF CINCPAC STAFF
AS PROMISED AND WILL BE AT HQS
008 TUESDAY 19 SEPTEMBER.

S E C R E T

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14 SEP 67 IN 52035

S E C R E T 141153Z CITE SAIGON 2044 [] ACTGJ

25X1

DIRECTOR INFO []

[]

1. MESSRS. HYLAND AND [] DEPARTED

SAIGON PANAM 2 14 SEPT. []

TAKING LEAVE EN ROUTE AND WILL ADVISE

HIS ETA WASHINGTON. MY HYLAND ETA

DULLES 1640 HOURS SATURDAY 16 SEPTEMBER

UNITED FLT 52.

2. MR. CARVER WILL DEPART SAIGON

16 SEPT ON PAN AM 2 FOR HONOLULU. REQUEST

[] ARRANGE WHATEVER CINCPAC BRIEFING CONFERENCES

SEEM DESIRABLE AND ADVISE HIM ON

ARRIVAL. HE HAS RESERVATIONS AT HAWAIIAN VILLAGE HOTEL.

3. MR. CARVER ETA DULLES 1640 HOURS

MONDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER VIA UNITED 52.

4. REQUEST WIVES BE INFORMED ABOVE

TRAVEL DETAILS.

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NIE 14-3-67

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ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)

FROM:

Deputy Legislative Counsel

EXTENSION

NO.

DATE

28 April 1975

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

RECEIVED

FORWARDED

OFFICER'S
INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

1.

C/IRS 2E42 Hqs.

2.

3.

4.

5.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

12.

13.

14.

On 24 April, Bob Layton, NIO/SEA, and I had a meeting with Representative Paul McCloskey (R., Calif.) in his office to review the attached SNIE. At that time, he asked that we raise for him whether the document can be released to him in sanitized or declassified form. Would you please consider the attached to be part of the material Mr. McCloskey sent to the Director for declassification/sanitization with the understanding that certain policy considerations may have to be tabled with Mr. Carver or the Director to finalize whatever action you recommend. Mr. Layton has given me a Xerox copy of the attached document which you will note is Top Secret, Controlled Dissem, Limited Distribution, one of which is attached hereto, one is being held in OLC files pending resolution of this matter and the third was returned to Mr. Layton.

[Signature]

Deputy Legislative Counsel

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FORM
3-62

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TS 186035
SNIF 14.3-67
13 November 1967

SPECIAL
NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE
NUMBER 14.3-67

Capabilities of the Vietnamese
Communists for Fighting in
South Vietnam

Submitted by

Richard Helms
DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

Concurred in by the
UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

(As indicated overleaf)

13 November 1967

Authenticated

James D. Lay
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, USIB

Pages 27

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The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate:

The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State and Defense, and the NSA.

Concurring:

Vice Adm. Rufus Taylor, Deputy Director, Central Intelligence

Mr. Thomas L. Hughes, the Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State

Lt. Gen. Joseph F. Carroll, Director, Defense Intelligence Agency

Gen. Marshall S. Carter, the Director, National Security Agency

Abstaining:

Mrs. Howard C. Brown, Jr., the Assistant General Manager, Atomic Energy Commission, and Mr. William O. Cregar, for the Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, the subject being outside of their jurisdiction.

WARNING

This material contains information affecting the National Defense of the United States within the meaning of the espionage laws, Title 18, USC, Secs. 793 and 794, the transmission or revelation of which in any manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited.

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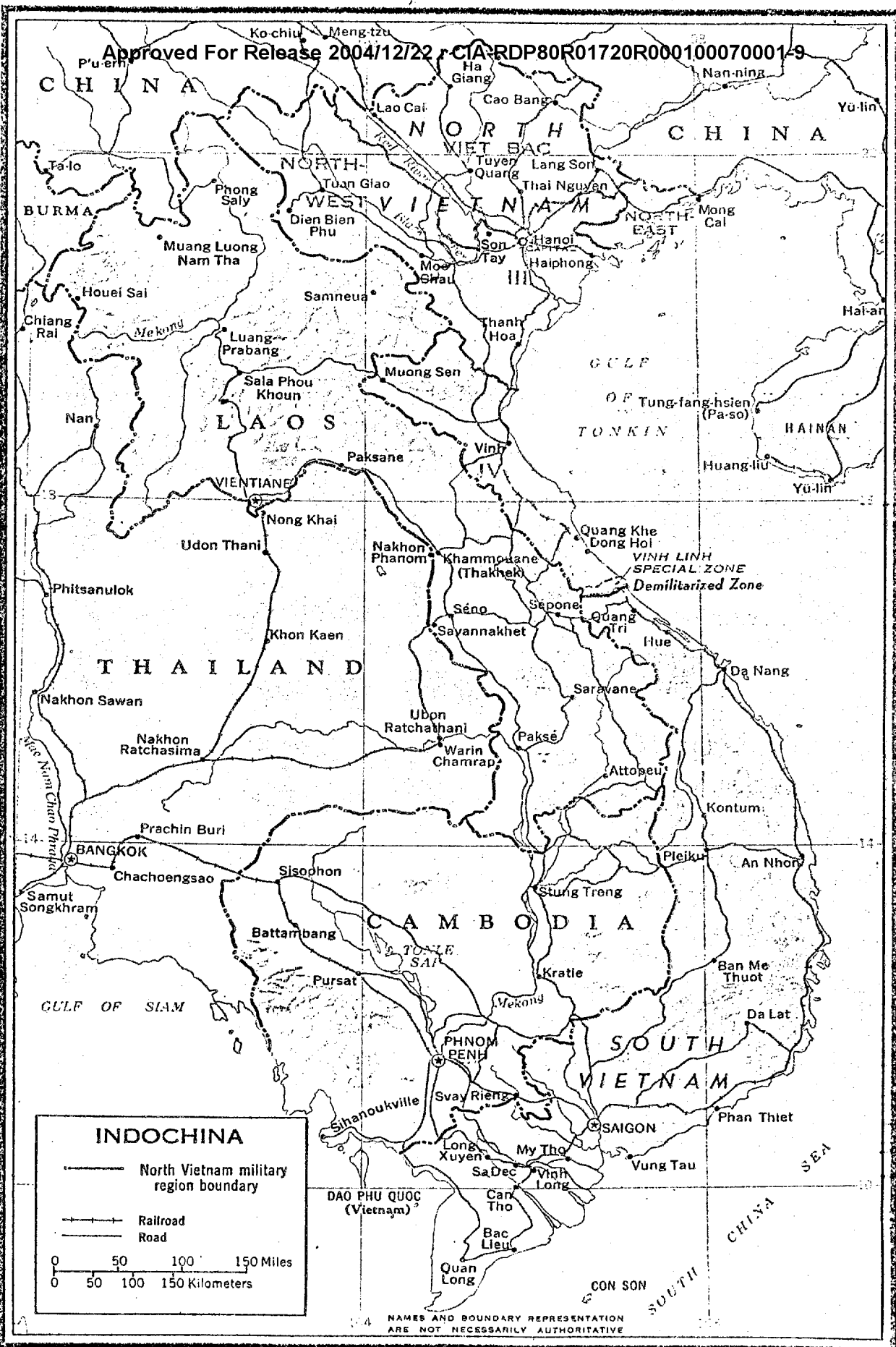
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TOP SECRET

1

CAPABILITIES OF THE VIETNAMESE COMMUNISTS FOR FIGHTING IN SOUTH VIETNAM¹

THE PROBLEM

To estimate the capabilities of the Vietnamese Communists to conduct military operations in South Vietnam over the next year or so.²

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Our earlier understanding of overall Communist capabilities in Vietnam had, of necessity, to rely heavily on data provided by the GVN. Much of this turned out to be unreliable, and in many instances our numerical estimates of Communist forces, other than for the Regular units, were too low. Our information has improved substantially in the past year or two, but the unconventional nature of the war poses difficult intelligence problems, the more so in a social environment where basic data is incomplete and often untrustworthy.

Manpower, for example, is a key element for the Communists but we lack precise basic data on population size, rates of growth, and age distribution for both North and South Vietnam. Assessing Communist capabilities also involves an understanding of the organization and effectiveness of the various components in the Communist military and political apparatus in South Vietnam. Much of the evidence on these components is obtained from a variety of sources, including captured documents, of varying reliability and timeliness. The analysis of this data, as well as that concerning North Vietnamese support to the South and all manpower questions requires complex methodological approaches which cannot rise above the uncertain data inputs.

¹ This estimate supersedes NIE 14.3-66, "North Vietnamese Military Potential for Fighting in South Vietnam," dated 7 July 1966, TOP SECRET.

² The figures in this estimate are current as of 1 October 1967.

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Our data and conclusions are therefore subject to continuing review and revision, especially since capabilities do not remain static. In this estimate we have concentrated on reaching the best judgments of the current strength of the Communist forces and, because of incomplete and unreliable basic data, we have not attempted to reconstruct Communist strength retrospectively.

Reservations with respect to evidence are explained where appropriate in the individual sections of the estimate. The main conclusions which follow, however, allow for such uncertainties in the supporting intelligence, represent our best appreciation of the overall situation as it now stands, and are based on the assumption that there is no radical change in the scale and nature of the war.

CONCLUSIONS

A. During the past year, Hanoi's direct control and share of the burden of the war in South Vietnam has grown substantially. This trend will continue.

B. Manpower is a major problem confronting the Communists. Losses have been increasing and recruitment in South Vietnam is becoming more difficult. Despite heavy infiltration from North Vietnam, the strength of the Communist military forces and political organizations in South Vietnam declined in the last year.

C. The major portion of this decline has probably been felt at the lower levels, reflecting a deliberate policy of sacrificing these levels to maintain the structure of political cadres and the strength of the Regular military forces. In particular the guerrillas, now estimated to total some 70,000-90,000, have suffered a substantial reduction since the estimated peak of about early 1966. Regular force strength, now estimated at 118,000, has declined only slightly, but Viet Cong (VC) units are increasingly dependent upon North Vietnamese replacements.

D. Given current Communist strategy, and levels of operations, a major effort will be necessary if the Regular forces and the guerrillas are to be maintained at or near present levels. To do so will require both a level of infiltration much higher than that observed in 1967 and intensive VC recruitment as well. Considering all the relevant factors, however, we believe there is a fairly good chance that the

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overall strength and effectiveness of the military forces and the political infrastructure will continue to decline.

E. The Communist leadership is already having problems in maintaining morale and quality. These problems have not yet impaired overall military effectiveness, but they are likely to become more difficult.

F. Difficulties in internal distribution will continue to cause local shortages and interfere with Communist operations from time to time. But we believe that the Communists will be able to continue to meet at least their essential supply requirement for the level of forces and activities in South Vietnam described in this estimate.

G. Communist strategy is to sustain a protracted war of attrition and to persuade the US that it must pull out or settle on Hanoi's terms. Our judgment is that the Communists still retain adequate capabilities to support this strategy for at least another year. Whether or not Hanoi does in fact persist with this strategy depends not only on its capabilities to do so, but on a number of political and international considerations not treated in this estimate.

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DISCUSSION

1. It has become increasingly obvious that Hanoi's share of the burden of war in South Vietnam has grown substantially. Infiltration of personnel in 1966, particularly into the northern provinces, was more than twice that of 1965. Hanoi's direct control of military and political operations has become more evident. The supply of weapons from the North has continued, and new weapons of greater firepower have been introduced. The logistical systems within North Vietnam and in Laos and Cambodia have been expanded since 1965 to provide a greater flexibility to cope with the effects of air interdiction, thereby enabling the Communists to meet higher levels of combat and support the growth of their forces to at least their present levels.

I. CAPABILITIES OF NORTH VIETNAM

A. Manpower and Mobilization Potential

2. The growing intensity of the war in the South and more than two years of US air strikes against the North have made manpower an increasingly important aspect in estimating Communist capabilities. Since mid-1965 the North Vietnamese Armed Forces have expanded from an estimated 250,000 men to at least 470,000. This expansion includes those troops in Laos and South Vietnam. The bulk of the physically fit draft age class of 17-year-olds (about 100,000 each year) is being taken into military service. The war in general and the bombing in particular have forced Hanoi to divert from 500,000 to 600,000 civilians (men and women, young and old) to full-time and part-time war-related activities.

3. Nevertheless, it does not appear that North Vietnam is encountering insurmountable problems in obtaining sufficient able-bodied men to support the war in South Vietnam. Of North Vietnam's total population of over 18 million, about 4 million or so are males between 15 and 49, and about half of these are probably physically fit for military service.⁸ At present, the North Vietnamese Armed Forces have taken less than one-quarter of the fit males aged 15 to 49 and less than two-fifths of the approximately 1.2 million fit males in the prime military ages of 17 to 35. Though there is some evidence of lowering of draft standards and extending of age limits, it appears that, with a few local exceptions, Hanoi is still drafting only those between the ages of 17 and 35.

4. The number of physically fit males above and beyond the annual increment of those reaching age 17 and who are not yet in the armed forces is substantial. The most obvious source of manpower is agriculture, where there are almost 3 million men of all ages, and where per capita production is low. There are also about half a million men in the service sector of the economy, including

⁸ These figures are based on US Census Bureau estimates of North Vietnam's population, which do not accept entirely the figures of North Vietnam's 1960 census and subsequent demographic statistics published through 1963.

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170,000 in consumer services; almost half a million men in industry, over half of whom are in handicrafts; and some 60,000 male students of military age.

5. There is of course no fixed percentage of these men who can be spared for military duty. Hanoi has already drawn men from the civilian economy for military and war-related tasks, replacing them where possible with women. Taking large additional numbers of men would obviously involve some additional costs to the civilian economy, but this would be a question of priorities in Hanoi. Losses in agricultural and industrial production can be made up by imports to the extent necessary to maintain essential subsistence levels of consumption; consumer services are to some degree expendable and education can be postponed. Thus we believe that the manpower problem, while growing more serious, is still manageable in North Vietnam. At a conservative estimate we believe there are some 100,000 to 200,000 men who could be called into military service, in addition to the annual draft class.

B. The Armed Forces

6. The North Vietnamese Armed Forces expanded last year and are now estimated to total about 470,000. Despite better evidence on their strength, there are still some uncertainties concerning the actual strength of units, the number of North Vietnamese Army (NVA) troops in Laos, and the size of the Armed Public Security Forces. The following table should be regarded as a conservative estimate.

TABLE 1
ESTIMATED NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMED FORCES
1 October 1967
SUMMARY

Army	447,500
Air Force	4,500
Navy	2,500
Armed Public Security Forces	16,500
TOTAL Armed Forces	471,000
North Vietnamese Army Breakdown	
Out-of-Country	
South Vietnam	54,000
Laos	18,000
TOTAL	72,000
In-Country	
Infantry	171,500
Air Defense ^a	93,000
Other ^b	111,000
TOTAL	375,500

^a This includes only regular army personnel in AAA units, radar, and SAM battalions. It does not include part-time air defense personnel such as militia, or logistical troops supporting air defense.

^b This includes artillery, armor, high command, logistics, engineers, and transportation.

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7. If the recruitment of men for replacements and for unit infiltration into the South should become a critical problem for Hanoi, as a last resort it could draw down its standing military establishment in North Vietnam. The number of troops which could be released for out-of-country duty would be influenced greatly by Hanoi's concern to retain a sizable force for defense against a possible invasion. If, for example, Hanoi should want to keep some 225,000 troops for the defense of North Vietnam and another 85,000 as a training base and for command and administration, then some 65,000 additional NVA troops could be made available for use outside of North Vietnam.

C. Military Training and Leadership

8. Special preinfiltration training of North Vietnamese recruits has averaged about 3 months, although increasing numbers of prisoners report training of only 1 month prior to infiltration. There is evidence of a growing deficiency of properly trained personnel to fill the ranks of squad leaders, platoon sergeants, and platoon leaders. There are indications that the normal source of platoon leaders, the Infantry Officers' School near Son Tay, has reduced its 2-year course to 8 months. The bulk of the reserve officers and noncommissioned officers have been recalled to active duty. The largest single source of junior officers is now from battlefield commissions.

D. Infiltration

9. North Vietnam has the capability to train 75,000-100,000 men a year for infiltration. By shortening current training cycles or increasing the number of units involved in the training of new recruits, this number could be substantially increased. Training replacements at the rate of 75,000-100,000 annually, however, would not permit organizing all of them into units and providing them with the necessary leadership at the same rate. Theoretically, North Vietnam could train and form 24-36 infantry regiments (48,000-72,000 men) per year, but at this pace there would be a considerable reduction in quality. In any case, actual formation and training of organized units for infiltration has been well short of this theoretical capability.

10. During 1966 at least 55,000 and possibly as many as 86,000 North Vietnamese troops were sent into South Vietnam (see Table 2). Through July 1966, the bulk of the infiltration was accounted for by the introduction of organized infantry regiments, including three regiments that moved directly across the DMZ. After July the pace of infiltration slackened somewhat, and it appeared that the Communist Regular force structure had reached planned levels. Most of the infiltration thereafter was to provide replacements in existing units.

11. During 1967, however, the introduction of organized units resumed—six regiments thus far—and the flow of individual replacements has continued. This mixture of units and individual replacements, plus the special situation along the DMZ, complicates an estimate of total infiltration. Not only is there the usual lag in identifying new units and infiltration groups, but there is less chance

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TABLE 2
MONTHLY INFILTRATION: 1966-1967 *
(Data as of 30 September 1967)

		Accepted			Monthly
		Confirmed	Probable	TOTAL	TOTALS
1966	Jan	4,200	1,800	6,000	9,000
	Feb	6,900	2,200	9,100	11,200
	Mar	11,700	1,400	13,100	16,700
	Apr	100	500	600	1,200
	May	1,300	500	1,800	5,400
	June	12,300	700	13,000	14,700
	July	4,000	700	4,700	8,800
	Aug	1,800	400	2,200	5,900
	Sept	1,400	700	2,100	2,700
	Oct	100	600	700	5,400
	Nov	500	100	600	1,200
	Dec	800	600	1,400	3,900
TOTAL 1966		45,100	10,200	55,300	86,100
1967	Jan	1,000	800	1,800	5,400
	Feb	1,700	2,000	3,700	5,000
	Mar	3,600	400	4,000	8,600
	Apr	3,700	600	4,300	4,600
	May	2,700	1,500	4,200	5,800
	June	3,300	—	3,300	3,600
	July	—	400	400	400
	Aug	1,100	—	1,100	1,800
	Sept	—	—	—	—

* Infiltration includes only arrivals in South Vietnam. Statistics for 1967 are subject to retroactive updating because of the continuing receipt of new information. In particular, the figures for the last 6 months or so are incomplete, and inadequate to determine trends. These figures include the following categories:

ACCEPTED: *Accepted Confirmed:* A confirmed infiltration unit/group is one which is accepted in South Vietnam on the basis of information provided by a minimum of two POW's or returnees from the unit/group, or two captured documents from the unit, or a combination of personnel and documents.

Accepted Probable: A probable infiltration unit/group is one which is accepted in South Vietnam on the basis of information provided by one POW or returnee from the unit/group, or a captured document, supported by information from other sources which can be evaluated as probably true.

POSSIBLE: A possible infiltration unit/group is one which may be in South Vietnam on the basis of information which can be evaluated as possibly true even though no POW, returnee, or document is available to verify the reports.

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of capturing personnel or documents from each of the numerous small replacement groups. There is also the problem of the units that suffer casualties in the DMZ area and return to North Vietnamese territory for replacements; these latter cannot always be identified as new infiltrators when the units return to South Vietnamese territory. A similar problem applies to other border areas.

12. Infiltration thus far in 1967 totals about 35,000 in all categories (accepted and possible). Allowing for the probability that later information will raise these figures, and extrapolating, it now appears that total infiltration for 1967 will be no more than last year's and possibly somewhat less. We estimate that some 65 to 75 percent of the infiltration will probably consist of replacement personnel for existing units. The remainder will probably include seven to nine organized regiments which will add to the Communist force structure but not necessarily their total military strength, because losses have resulted in generally lower unit strengths. There still appears to be no clear-cut seasonal pattern in infiltration or any significant indication that Hanoi is unwilling to dispatch additional men and units to South Vietnam.

E. LOCs⁴

13. Supplies for Communist forces move into South Vietnam by various means. In North Vietnam, truck, rail, and water transport are used to bring supplies through Military Region 4 (MR-4). From MR-4, most supplies are trucked through Laos, although some use of waterways is also made in Laos. Some supplies move directly across the DMZ, and some are moved by sea. In addition, some supplies from Cambodia enter South Vietnam directly while others are routed through Laos.

14. *Roads.* The Communist logistical roadnet in MR-4 in North Vietnam and in Laos was improved over the past year. Though the improvements have increased tonnage capacities somewhat, they were intended primarily to provide additional flexibility for the system and better year-round movement. One development was the extension of a new motorable road from Laos directly into the A Shau Valley of South Vietnam. In addition, the administration and operational control of the LOCs have been improved and expanded. The capacity of the entire system for delivery of supplies to South Vietnam through Laos continues to be limited by the capacities of the routes in Laos rather than by those of North Vietnam.

15. *Trucks.* We estimate that at the end of 1965 the North Vietnamese had an inventory of between 11,000 and 12,000 trucks. Losses from air attack have been substantial, and North Vietnam has been forced to increase its imports to counter this attrition. Imports from Eastern Europe, the USSR, and China have enabled North Vietnam roughly to maintain the size of its inventory.

16. Maintenance problems have increased, and as many as 30 percent of the trucks may not be operable on a daily basis. There is a lack of well-equipped,

⁴ See centerspread map.

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properly manned maintenance facilities, and the variety of truck imports has resulted in a fleet of over 30 models from at least seven different countries. POL imports into North Vietnam during the first half of 1967 have been at record levels, and we have had no evidence of any serious POL shortages affecting the movement of supplies to South Vietnam.

17. *Waterways.* The coastal and inland waterway system in North Vietnam provides a useful supplement to the road and rail system and has been used extensively, particularly since the start of the US bombing program. Although the mining of some North Vietnamese waterways has reduced the movement of large craft, small boat traffic continues. Increasing imports of barges and barge sections into North Vietnam and a program of waterway improvement indicate that the Communists intend to exploit further the potentialities of these water routes. In Laos, there has been increased use of small pirogues and motor-boats on rivers over the last year. The use of these waterways will probably continue to increase.

18. *Rail.* The North Vietnamese also use the rail line south of Hanoi for movement of supplies into MR-4. Despite repeated US air attacks, the North Vietnamese have been able to construct bypasses and keep sections of the line serviceable from Hanoi to Vinh. South of Vinh the rail line is not operable for regular rail equipment. The North Vietnamese can only use light gear, principally trucks with converted wheels, to transport supplies over the remaining rail segment in this area.

19. *Impact of Air Attacks.* Air attacks in North Vietnam, Laos, and the DMZ have destroyed trucks, railroad rolling stock, and watercraft, have damaged the highway and rail systems, and have restricted the movement of cargo and personnel particularly during daylight hours. They have created construction problems and delays, caused interruptions in the flow of men and supplies, caused a great loss of work-hours, and forced North Vietnam to tie up large numbers of people in air defense and in the repair of LOCs. Communist countermeasures in North Vietnam and Laos have included diversification of the means of transport to include greater use of inland waterways and porter trails, construction of alternate roads, and of multiple bypasses at important bridges. A number of truck parks and vehicle pull-offs for quick convoy dispersal have been built. These measures have increased the ability of the Communists to cope with the effects of air attacks, although at a considerable cost and effort. Units and personnel moving to South Vietnam have been forced to move under cover of darkness, slowing their movement and subjecting them to the rigors of the trail for longer periods.

20. *Cambodia.* The importance of Cambodia as a sanctuary and a source of supply (principally rice) to the Communist war effort is substantial and growing.⁵ Recently captured documents indicate that some Communist units in Tay Ninh

⁵ For a more detailed discussion of this subject, see SNIE 57-67, "Significance of Cambodia to the Vietnamese Communist War Effort," dated 19 January 1967, SECRET. We believe the conclusions are still valid.

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Province have substantially increased their purchases in Cambodia since March 1966. The movement of supplies in Cambodia to Communist forces along the border, particularly on the Se San and Tonle Kong Rivers in the northeast and along Route 110 in Laos, has increased in the past year. Indications are that Communist units along the Cambodian border have been stockpiling some of the food and other materials obtained from Cambodia.

21. There is still no good evidence, however, that substantial amounts of weapons or ammunition are being obtained by the Communists from Cambodian stocks or through Cambodian ports. On the other hand, there is evidence that Communist units, particularly in the border area, receive arms and ammunition from stockpiles maintained on Cambodian territory. These munitions probably were moved south through Laos. Should infiltration of arms into South Vietnam through Laos be substantially reduced, Cambodia could be an alternative route for the Communists.

22. *Sea Infiltration.* We are unable to estimate the extent of the infiltration of supplies by sea into South Vietnam. We believe, however, that such infiltration has been greatly reduced by US counterefforts. Much of the Communists' use of sea routes, at present, is for the movement of supplies along the South Vietnamese coast. We believe that when a pressing need exists North Vietnam will increase attempts to move some supplies by sea, primarily arms and ammunition.

II. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN THE SOUTH

A. Communist Forces

23. For the purpose of this estimate, we consider the following elements of the Communist organization in South Vietnam: the Regular forces (NVA and VC Main and Local forces), the administrative service units which support them, the VC guerrilla forces, the political cadres, the self-defense forces, the secret self-defense forces, and the "Assault Youth." The contribution of these diverse elements to the Communist effort in South Vietnam differs widely in value. Their capabilities and missions are set forth in the following paragraphs.

24. We believe that, with the exception of the Regular forces, we have previously underestimated the strength of these elements. The figures carried in this estimate for these elements reflect new information and analysis rather than an increase in actual Communist strength. Furthermore, our information on the strength and organization of the different elements varies widely. For the Regular forces it is good; for other components it is much less reliable, less current, and less detailed. The resulting uncertainties are explained in the following paragraphs and are reflected by the use of ranges in the estimates we present.

25. *Regular Forces.* We are reasonably confident that the Communist Regular forces in South Vietnam now total about 118,000 troops who are generally well-armed (see Table 3). This strength has fluctuated over the past 12 months; it is now somewhat less than it was at this time last year. During this period,

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however, an increasing number of NVA replacements have been introduced into VC Main force units.

TABLE 3
ESTIMATED STRENGTH OF REGULAR COMMUNIST FORCES IN SOUTH VIETNAM
(As of 1 October 1967)

Type	Number	Organization
Regular NVA Forces	54,000	3 Front Headquarters ^a 7 Division Headquarters ^b ^c 26 Regiments (18 divisional and 8 separate) 106 Battalions (76 regimental and 30 separate)
VC Main and Local Forces	64,000 ^d	2 Division Headquarters ^b 11 Regiments (7 divisional and 4 separate) 96 Battalions (34 regimental and 62 separate) 234 Separate Companies 54 Separate Platoons
TOTAL	118,000	

^a A Front is a military organization designed to perform tactical and administrative functions and to control a number of units in a specific area. A Front is intentionally flexible, its military force composition changes as operational requirements dictate. Vietnamese Communist Fronts currently operating against South Vietnam are the B-3 Front, the DMZ Front, and the Northern Front or Subregion (now called the Tri-Thien-Hue Military Region). (See map on page 17.)

^b NVA/VC divisions in South Vietnam are considered as light infantry divisions tailored specifically for operation in South Vietnam. These divisions are highly foot-mobile and are flexible in force structure, organization, and strength. They normally are composed of three regiments (of about 1,500-2,000 per regiment) with varying technical and fire support elements. They lack wheeled transport and the type of artillery normally associated with NVA conventional divisions.

^c In addition to the seven NVA divisions in South Vietnam, elements of the 341st division in North Vietnam have been committed from time to time to operations south of the DMZ under control of the DMZ Front.

^d This total includes some NVA replacements; see paragraph 56.

26. *Administrative Service Units.* There is an extensive system for the administrative support of both NVA and VC Regular forces. It operates throughout South Vietnam and extends into Laos and Cambodia as well as the area immediately north of the DMZ. In South Vietnam it includes the military personnel in the staff and service elements (e.g., medics, ordnance, logistics, etc.) comprising the central, regional, provincial and district military headquarters, and in rear service technical units of all types directly subordinate to these headquarters. The need for administrative service forces, and hence their size, varies widely from province to province.

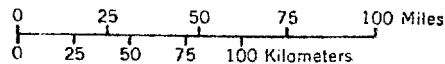
27. We cannot be confident of the total size of the administrative service forces at any given time. Information on the current strength of the administrative services at the various echelons is insufficient to establish a firm estimate. This force has almost certainly suffered attrition and has probably been drawn down to provide some combat replacements. Moreover, we do not estimate

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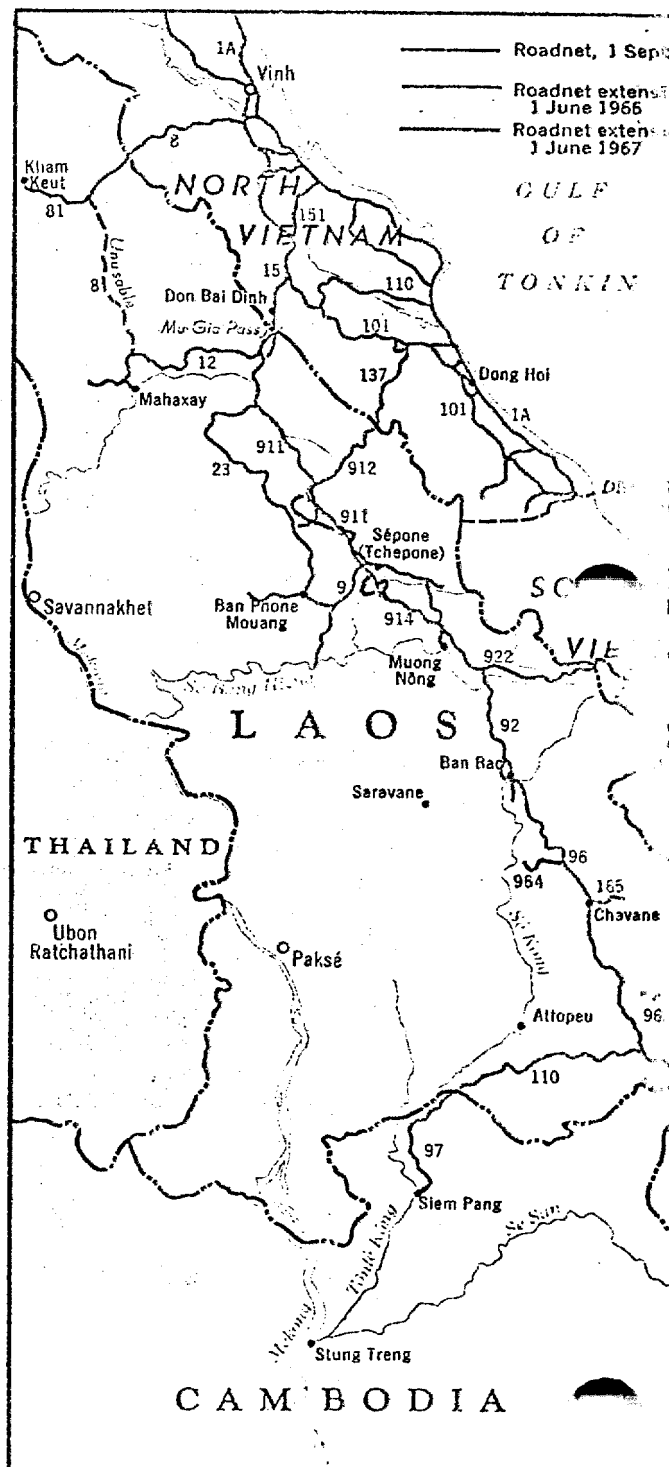
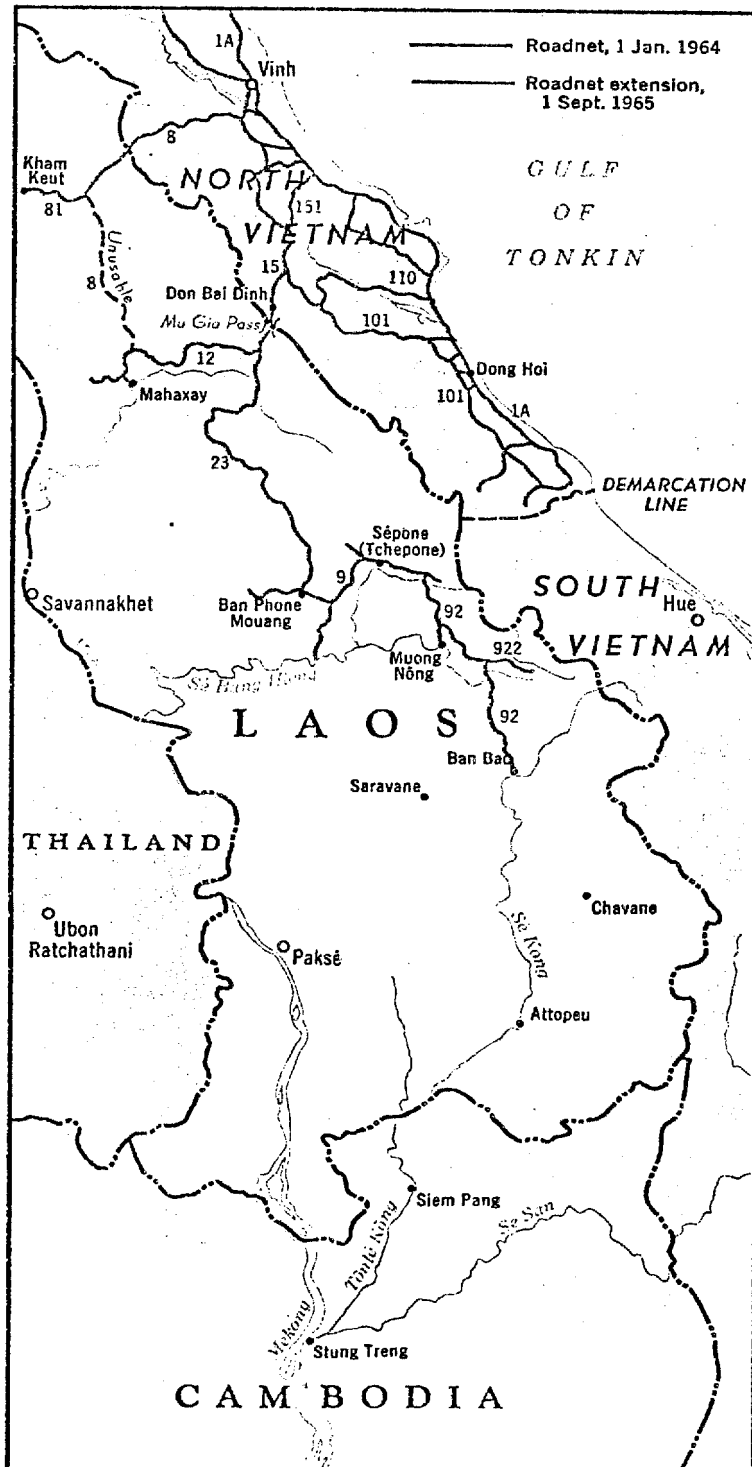
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LAOS PANHANDLE AREA COMMUNIST ROADNET

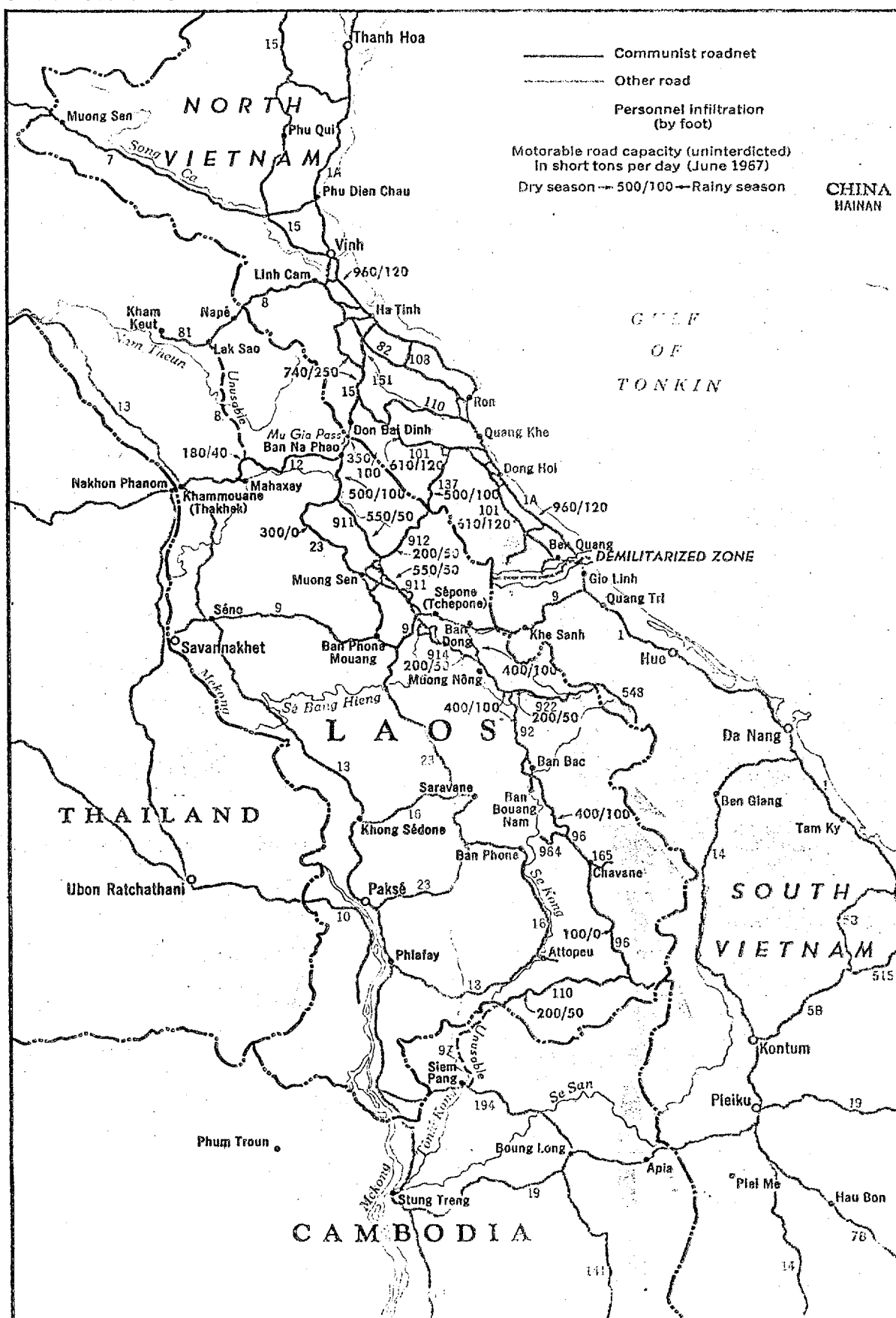
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EXPANSION OF THE COMMUNIST ROADNET



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the size of the administrative service units located outside the boundaries of South Vietnam which support the forces in the DMZ and the western highlands. In light of these considerations, we estimate that there are now at least 35,000-40,000 administrative service personnel in South Vietnam who are performing essential administrative support functions. In addition, almost anyone under VC control can be and is impressed into service to perform specific administrative or support tasks as local conditions require.

28. *Guerrillas.* The guerrillas provide an essential element of the VC combat capability. They are organized into squads and platoons which are not necessarily restricted to their home village or hamlet. Typical missions for guerrillas are terrorist and sabotage activities, protection of villages and hamlets, provision of assistance to VC Main and Local force units as well as NVA, and the creation of local threats in order to divert allied forces to local security missions.

29. The guerrilla force has been subject to conflicting pressures. On the one hand, increasing numbers of guerrillas have been drawn upon to provide replacements for the VC Main and Local forces, because these have suffered heavy casualties as a result of more intense combat. At the same time, numerous captured documents as well as VC propaganda indicate a concern to increase the guerrilla force substantially. There is evidence which suggests that the leadership set very high force goals for the guerrillas but had, by mid-1966, fallen far short of its aims.

30. Information from captured documents leads us to believe that we have previously underestimated the guerrilla strength. Certain Communist documents which date from early 1966 assert that there were then about 170,000-180,000 guerrillas. This figure was almost certainly exaggerated. There is evidence which suggests that the Communists sometimes consider other groups part of the guerrilla force and therefore carry a larger number of guerrillas on their rolls. There is also considerable uncertainty over the accuracy of VC reporting at the lower levels. We believe that guerrilla strength has declined over the past year or so because of losses, upgrading of some personnel to Main and Local force units, and recruiting difficulties. We are unable to substantiate the extent to which the VC have been able to replace guerrilla losses. Considering all the available evidence and allowing for some uncertainties, we estimate that the current strength of the guerrilla force is 70,000-90,000.

31. *The Political Organization.* Presiding over the Communist effort is the political apparatus. This includes the leadership and administration of the National Liberation Front (NLF) and the People's Revolutionary Party (the name under which the North Vietnamese Communist Party operates in South Vietnam), both of which extend down to the hamlet level. The apparatus not only acts as a government in VC-controlled areas but also has major responsibilities for maintaining morale and for mobilizing manpower and other resources in support of the war effort. Its functions are not primarily military and it is therefore not included in the military order of battle. Nevertheless, it does represent a continuing potential for organizing and motivating the military forces. Through this apparatus the Communists seek to control the people of

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South Vietnam. It is, therefore, a key element which ultimately will have to be overcome along with the military and guerrilla forces. Its numbers are large—with a hard core estimated at about 75,000-85,000—but more important is the wide geographical extent of its power and the dedication and effectiveness of its personnel. 11

32. *Other Communist Organizations.* The Communists make a deliberate effort to organize most of the people under their control into various work forces and semimilitary organizations. Among the more significant of these organizations are the self-defense forces, secret self-defense forces, and groups such as the "Assault Youth." Moreover, when occasion demands, almost every able-bodied person under VC control may be called upon to support the war effort.

33. The self-defense force is described by the Communists as a military organization. It is clear, however, that its organization and mission differ from that of village and hamlet guerrillas. Self-defense forces include people of all ages and a substantial percentage of them are females. They are largely unarmed and only partially trained. The duties of self-defense units include the maintenance of law and order, the construction of bunkers and strong points, warning against the approach of allied forces, and the defense of villages and hamlets in VC-controlled territory. Self-defense forces do not leave their home areas, and members generally perform their duties part-time. Their existence poses an impediment to allied sweeps and pacification, however, and in their defensive role, they inflict casualties on allied forces. }

34. Another element, the secret self-defense forces, operates in government-controlled and contested areas. They provide a residual Communist presence in such areas and support the Communist effort primarily by clandestine intelligence activities. }

35. During the past year we have learned more about a VC organization called "Assault Youth." They serve full time at district level and above, and they are organized into companies and platoons. Although some are armed, the Communists do not consider them a combat force; their primary mission appears to be logistical, frequently in battlefield areas. This organization also serves as a manpower pool and provides a training program for youth who later go into the VC Main and Local forces. Little information is available to indicate the strength or distribution of the "Assault Youth."

36. Our current evidence does not enable us to estimate the present size of these groups (self-defense, secret self-defense, the "Assault Youth," or other similar VC organizations) with any measure of confidence. Some documents suggest that in early 1966 the aggregate size of the self-defense force was on the order of 150,000. This force and the other groups, however, have unquestionably suffered substantial attrition since that time, as well as an appreciable decline in quality, because of losses, recruiting of some of their members into the guer- ✓

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rillas or other VC military components and, particularly, the shrinkage in VC control of populated areas. Though in aggregate numbers these groups are still large and constitute a part of the overall Communist effort, they are not offensive military forces. Hence, they are not included in the military order of battle total. Nevertheless, some of their members account for a part of the total Communist military losses.

37. In sum, the Communist military and political organization is complex, and its aggregate numerical size cannot be estimated with confidence. Moreover, any such aggregate total would be misleading since it would involve adding components that have widely different missions and degrees of skill or dedication. The VC/NVA Military Force (Main and Local forces, administrative service elements and guerrillas) can be meaningfully presented in numerical totals and, as indicated above, we estimate that this Military Force is now at least 223,000-248,000. It must be recognized, however, that this Military Force constitutes but one component of the total Communist organization. Any comprehensive judgment of Communist capabilities in South Vietnam must embrace the effectiveness of all the elements which comprise that organization, the total size of which is of course considerably greater than the figure given for the Military Force.

B. The Command Structure

38. The Communists have continued to modify their command apparatus, and, in particular, Hanoi has significantly increased its direct control. This is most apparent in the DMZ and central highlands areas where Hanoi increasingly bypasses both COSVN and Military Region 5 (MR-5) Headquarters. With the exception of two VC divisions and one NVA division, all division headquarters and all the confirmed Fronts are in MR-5 or the DMZ area.⁶ In addition to the creation of the DMZ Front, which is controlled directly by Hanoi, it appears almost certain that MR-5 has been divided into three operational areas: The Tri-Thien-Hue Military Region (formerly the Northern Front or Subregion), the B-3 or Western Highlands Front, and the remaining coastal provinces of the region.⁷ There is substantial evidence that Hanoi also exercises direct military control over the Tri-Thien-Hue Military Region and the B-3 Front.

C. Logistical Support

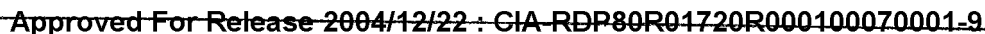
39. During the past year captured documents and POW interrogations have provided a better basis for estimating how much of each class of supplies was needed and consumed by the Communist forces. Table 4 shows the estimated total daily Communist requirement in South Vietnam for Regular and Administrative Service Forces and that portion of it which comes from external sources.

40. About one-quarter of the daily requirement for both 1966 and 1967 was drawn from sources outside of South Vietnam. There is a growing dependence

⁶ The remainder of the command structure consists of provincial commands and of separate units, both directly subordinate to the respective VC military regions.

⁷ See map on opposite page for provinces included in these areas.

SOUTH VIETNAM
ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS
OCTOBER 1967



on external sources, not only for Classes II and IV (weapons and equipment), Class V (ammunition), but also for Class I (food). This is partly because of allied denial efforts and partly a result of the growing proportion of North Vietnamese forces in South Vietnam, especially since these are generally deployed in food deficit areas. VC guerrilla forces probably require a small amount of food and ammunition from external sources, but the bulk of their supplies is obtained from local sources within South Vietnam. We have not included guerrilla forces in the logistical computations.

TABLE 4

ESTIMATED DAILY LOGISTICAL RESUPPLY REQUIREMENTS FOR NVA AND VC
REGULAR AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT FORCES IN SOUTH VIETNAM*

(As of 30 September 1967)

Class	Short Tons Per Day	
	External	Total
I (Food) ^b	38-40	177-183
II & IV (Weapons, Quartermaster, Engineer, Medical, Signal, Chemical, etc.)	6-7	23-24
III (POL)	Negl.	Negl.
V (Ammunition) ^c	10	11
TOTAL	54-57	211-218

* Based on 118,000 NVA and VC Main and Local force troops, and 35,000-40,000 administrative support troops. Requirements are computed on the basis of actual strength, which is about 70 percent of full TO&E strength. In estimating weapons requirements, losses due to capture or destruction were considered, as were losses due to normal attrition. In addition, an allowance was made to provide for the reequipping of those forces who are not presently equipped with the new family of weapons. These requirements, of course, will change as weapons losses fluctuate over time. Ammunition requirements are based upon estimates of actual ammunition expenditures in combat, and may be subject to a considerable margin of error.

^b Includes a 15 percent factor for spoilage, but does not include replacement of food captured or destroyed by friendly forces.

^c One-third of the weight of the external requirement represents a packaging factor; two-thirds of the weight is actual ammunition. No packaging factor is included in estimating internal ammunition requirements. The total ammunition requirement does include the external packaging factor.

41. Communist logistical requirements from external sources vary considerably in both amounts and class in the different areas of South Vietnam. In the northern provinces, for example, the requirement is probably higher per soldier than elsewhere in South Vietnam because the rate of combat there has been higher, and the troops are predominantly NVA and are better equipped. In the rice-deficit highlands, the external requirement for food is high. On the other hand, in the Delta and the Saigon area, Communist troops probably have no external requirement for food.

42. While we cannot estimate with confidence what proportions of external logistic resupply requirements are met by the respective routes into South Viet-

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nam, some generalizations can be made about the logistical systems involved. The road network through the Laotian Panhandle is used primarily to supply weapons, equipment, and ammunition. A portion of the food requirement for Communist forces in the northern provinces is infiltrated through or around the DMZ along with some other supplies. Cambodia is primarily a source for food (probably over 80 percent of the Communists' external requirement) and some items such as medical supplies and radios. Within South Vietnam, the Communist procurement and distribution system is usually organized under the Communist military regional headquarters.

43. *Food Supply.* The Communists continue to have problems with food supplies in certain areas, because of local shortages, distribution bottlenecks, and the effects of allied military operations which have increasingly intruded into Communist base areas and disrupted the supply network. The amount of Communist food supplies captured or destroyed by allied forces in 1967 is substantial. From 1 January through 30 August it amounted to an average of 55 to 75 tons per day, which is more than one-fourth the Communist Regular and Administrative Forces' daily requirement, and greater than their external requirement. But despite some severe local difficulties, the overall effectiveness of the Communist military forces has not yet been seriously impaired by these problems. The food requirements for the Communists in many areas are met from internal sources through taxation, purchase, and coercion. However, the Communist military forces in the DMZ area and in the rice-deficient areas in the highlands are largely dependent on imports from North Vietnam and Cambodia.

44. On balance, we believe that food supply problems for the Communists are likely to become more burdensome, and in some areas will impede military operations. Nevertheless, we do not believe that food shortages will greatly restrict overall Communist operations in the near future as long as the Communists have access to Cambodian rice.

45. *Impact of New and Heavier Weapons.* Communist forces in South Vietnam have increased their mortar, rocket, and artillery attacks. Over a year ago, 120 mm mortars and 70 mm and 75 mm howitzers began to be used. Other types of weapons have been employed since early 1967. These include Chinese Communists 102 mm rockets, Soviet 122 mm and 140 mm rockets, and RPG-7 antitank grenade launchers. In addition, the NVA has fired light and medium artillery into South Vietnam from positions within or north of the DMZ. The use of these heavier weapons in the DMZ area has increased substantially in 1967, and during periods of peak fire in September it is estimated that Communist forces in that area were expending mortar, rocket, and artillery ammunition at a rate of close to 4 tons per day.

46. The estimated ammunition expenditure for all mortar, artillery, and rocket weapons of the Communist forces in South Vietnam for the first 8 months of

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1967, not including that fired against allied forces just south of the DMZ averaged less than 1 ton per day. While logistic problems would inhibit increased use of these heavier weapons throughout South Vietnam on the scale they have been used near the DMZ, it is likely the Communists will increase their capabilities for mortar, rocket, and artillery attack against selected fixed targets.

47. Hanoi has recently concluded a new agreement with the USSR for military aid. It is possible that Hanoi has sought more sophisticated types of equipment than those now arriving on the scene. These might include cruise missiles and tactical rockets which could be used to support North Vietnamese operations in the DMZ area and against US warships.⁸ A continuing and intensive watch has been maintained for any indications of the presence of these or larger missiles in North Vietnam. So far, no deliveries have been detected.

48. The North Vietnamese already have some SA-2s in the vicinity of the DMZ and we think it likely they might increase the numbers of SA-2s there. It is also possible, but less likely, that they would deploy SA-2s in Laos. They would almost certainly not introduce them into South Vietnam. It is possible that Hanoi would use aircraft against South Vietnam but we think this unlikely. In general, we believe that during the coming months the Soviets will continue to supply equipment designed to strengthen air and coastal defenses in North Vietnam and to increase the firepower of both the regular North Vietnamese forces and the Communist forces fighting in the South.

D. Communist Manpower in the South

49. *Communist Losses.* Total Communist losses have been rising sharply over the past 2 years. On the basis of the latest data, we estimate that total losses for 1967 will amount to about 170,000—an increase of about two-thirds compared with 1966. The bulk of these losses are killed-in-action as reported from body count. Our estimate of permanent losses from wounds is based on evidence indicating that for every 100 killed there would probably be 150 wounded, and that, of these, at least 35 die or are permanently disabled. Obviously, these figures involve a margin for error, but since they cannot take into account all casualties from air attacks or from artillery fire, or losses from sickness and accident, the killed and wounded estimates are probably not overstated. Figures for military returnees and prisoners are firm. But the number of deserters is an estimate based on a study that suggests there is likely to be one permanent desertion for every military returnee. If the overall totals do err, it is likely to be on the low side.

*For more detailed information on the types of weapons which the Soviets might supply the North Vietnamese, and the likelihood of their doing so, see SNIE 11-11-67, "Soviet Attitudes and Intentions Toward the Vietnam War," dated 4 May 1967, SECRET. We believe the conclusions are still valid.

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TABLE 5
ESTIMATED COMMUNIST LOSSES IN SOUTH VIETNAM

	1966	1967 (Estimated Total) ^a
Killed-in-Action	55,500	90,000
Permanently Lost from Wounds	19,000	31,000
Military Returnees	13,000	21,000
Prisoners	2,500	7,000
Deserters	13,000	21,000
TOTAL	103,000^b	170,000^b

^a The 1967 estimated totals are the projections of averages of Communist losses during the first 9 months of 1967.

^b These totals include not only losses for Regular and Administrative Service Forces and guerrillas, but also losses for an unknown number of other Communist elements such as self-defense, secret self-defense forces, and "Assault Youth," etc.

50. A major problem in assessing the significance of these Communist losses is that we are unable to determine what proportion are suffered by the fighting forces and what proportion by such elements as the self-defense forces, "Assault Youth," conscripted laborers and other civilians caught up in combat areas. What is clear is that not all of the killed and wounded are members of primary fighting units (NVA Regular forces, VC Main and Local forces, and guerrillas). Consequently, we cannot estimate the loss to these Communist military forces for any given year.

51. *VC Manpower Inputs.* In the face of these increasingly heavy losses, the manpower resources available to the VC and the actual rate of recruitment are critical elements in an estimate of Communist capabilities to continue military operations. A calculation of manpower available to the VC for recruitment is difficult because of the absence of trustworthy population statistics. But even if such statistics were fairly accurate, major assumptions have to be made concerning what percentage of able-bodied males are available to the VC recruitment apparatus in their own areas, in the contested areas, and in GVN-controlled areas.

52. Bearing in mind these caveats, we estimate that the VC may have access to approximately 1.4 million males between the ages of 15 and 45. From this total, we believe that the VC could recruit from a manpower pool of some 700,000-800,000 men, though less than half of this total are in VC-controlled areas.

53. It is difficult to reconcile this apparently large block of manpower derived from limited demographic data, with the increasing evidence over the past year of VC problems in obtaining recruits. One reason for this discrepancy is that the manpower in VC areas is already subject to other important requirements which are related to the war effort, such as food production, and some of these tasks are increasing. A second reason for VC difficulties is that losses of all types have probably reduced the real, as opposed to the theoretical manpower

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available to the VC. The third, and perhaps most important reason is the declining ability of the VC to obtain recruits because of allied forays into contested areas, the mounting flow of refugees out of these areas, and the likelihood that individuals are more reluctant to enlist in the VC movement than in 1964-1965 when the Communists appeared to be riding a crest of success.

54. These increasing recruitment problems are least evident in the Regular forces and most conspicuous among the guerrillas and self-defense forces, and have resulted in unfilled recruitment quotas, reduced standards (as to age, physical condition, and political reliability), and greater employment of women and youth. They have been particularly severe in areas of intense allied military pressure, but have not been totally absent elsewhere. Moreover, the Revolutionary Development (RD) program poses a threat to Communist access to the population, and is undoubtedly one of the reasons the VC have decided to exert heavy pressure against it.

55. We estimated that during 1966 the VC were probably able to recruit about 7,000 men per month. A reevaluation of recruitment for early 1967, however, shows that this performance has fallen off. We estimate that the average monthly recruitment probably falls within the range of 3,000 to 5,000 men per month for the Main forces, the Local forces, and the guerrillas. In addition, however, the VC commonly upgrade personnel from the lower to the higher echelons of the Communist organization. For example, a Local force unit will receive replacements from village guerrillas in the area; and these guerrillas in turn may be replaced by hamlet guerrillas, self-defense forces, or "Assault Youth." Some recent evidence suggests that in IV Corps, hamlet guerrillas and hamlet self-defense forces are being consolidated.

56. In any case, a persuasive indication of growing manpower problems for the VC is the increasing number of individual NVA soldiers serving as replacements in VC Main forces units. A study in late 1966 of a number of VC units in III Corps area indicated that at least 23 percent of the men in VC Main force units were NVA replacements, and the percentage is probably higher now. VC units in I and II Corps probably contain a higher percentage of NVA personnel, but we have not found NVA personnel in VC units in the Delta.

57. *Quality and Morale.* The rapid manpower turnover caused by increasing casualties has lowered the quality of all the VC fighting forces, but it is not yet apparent that this has seriously impaired their military effectiveness. The Communists have been forced to rely more and more on coercion to obtain recruits, have made greater use of women to free men for combat, and have reduced their recruitment and training standards. The decline in quality has been greatest at the lower levels, where personnel have repeatedly been siphoned off for higher echelons. More important, though probably not so pronounced, is the decline in the quality of the cadres—the cement of the VC organization.

58. In an endeavor to rectify this situation the Communists are resorting to several expedients to overcome weaknesses in their political operations. These

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include intensive indoctrination sessions and the infusion of North Vietnamese cadre into the VC organization. Since mid-1966, the VC have also been shifting some experienced cadre down to the lower levels to improve the quality of leadership and to eliminate the overdependence of village and hamlet party chapters on higher echelons. Some administrative reorganizations have also been instituted in an attempt to strengthen local responsibility and initiative. The effects of such measures are not yet evident, but could somewhat improve VC efficiency at lower levels.

59. Captured documents and evidence from prisoners amply demonstrate that morale problems are becoming serious and are likely to become worse as the war continues. But there have been no mass defections. This year's returnee rate, a statistical indicator of morale, is well above last year's rate. Captured documents have repeatedly noted this trend as one of the Communists' major shortcomings. Since the bulk of the returnees come from the lower levels of the VC structure, the immediate effect of these losses has not been critical. The troops continue to fight well, and the VC infrastructure remains generally strong. Over the longer term, however, such losses not only deprive the Communists of manpower, but, more important, they erode the base of the VC infrastructure.

III. THE OUTLOOK FOR COMMUNIST FORCES

60. In early 1965, prior to the commitment of sizable US forces, the Communists apparently expected to administer a knockout blow. After a period of some uncertainty and hesitation created by the US intervention in 1965, and certain tactical setbacks to the Communist forces, a general political-military strategy was worked out at the 12th Plenum of the North Vietnamese Communist Party in December 1965. This spelled out how to fight the war and manage its international aspects under the altered circumstances.

61. The essence of these decisions was to maintain sufficient forces in being to support a prolonged and aggressive war of attrition. Their objective in pursuing this strategy was and is to persuade the US that it cannot win; that it must eventually pull out or settle on terms favorable to Hanoi's further pursuit of its political goals. As part of this strategy, the war would be conducted without specific timetables; negotiations would be avoided unless from a position of significant military successes; and an effort would be made to limit the risks of an expanded war in the North or throughout Southeast Asia. This strategy aimed at maintaining a continuous threat by Regular forces, avoiding combat under unfavorable conditions, sustaining a high level of guerrilla activity, and undertaking limited objective offensives when favorable opportunities arise.

62. During 1966 and thus far in 1967, the Communists have apparently adhered to these basic decisions. For example, a new debate arose in late 1966 over the role of the guerrillas with some officials advocating a greater role for these forces at the expense of the Main forces. This proposition has apparently been rejected as tantamount to accepting a "strategic" reversal. Nevertheless, it is clear that debates over military-political tactics are continuing.

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63. Perhaps the most important problem for Hanoi during the last year has been how to maintain military pressure in the face of the superior firepower and mobility of the Allied forces. Its answer to this problem has been to emphasize artillery, rocket, and mortar attacks, especially on I Corps, and to develop substantial threats by large units in border areas in such a way as to spread thin the Allied forces, open opportunities for localized "victories," and create better conditions for attacks against the RD program. Over the past year the Communists have used elements of at least three and possibly four divisions in the DMZ area plus artillery and some air defense units. Another buildup of Communist forces has taken place in the highlands along the Cambodian border. Such threats tie down large US forces in these areas, thereby lessening Allied military pressures elsewhere.

64. *Future Force Levels.* Regardless of their previous policy decisions, the Communists will assess the actual situation as it evolves. Their decisions as to force structure and strengths over the next year will be affected in part by the level of combat, their casualty rates, the extent of any further buildup of Allied forces in the South, and the overall impact of the war effort against the North. Another factor which complicates estimates of future force structure and strength levels is that North Vietnam retains the capability to move division size forces across the DMZ. Should they exercise this option, then the total force structure in South Vietnam could be expanded relatively quickly by introducing one or two divisions into Quang Tri Province. Regardless of whether they introduce these divisions in the DMZ area, we feel the NVA will still try to expand its Regular forces in South Vietnam, by the deployment of some new combat infantry regiments. However, this may not result in any net increase in the numerical strength of Regular forces since continuing losses may further reduce the average unit strength.

65. Taking into consideration the estimated rates of infiltration, and allowing for the downward trend in population control by the VC, the rising Communist casualties, and VC recruiting problems, we conclude that the strength of the Communist military forces and political organizations in South Vietnam declined in the last year. The major portion of this decline has probably been felt at the lowest levels, reflecting a deliberate policy of sacrificing this level to maintain the structure of political cadres and the strength of the Regular military forces. Whether this trend will continue is difficult to estimate. There are still important unknowns and variables involved in measuring total losses against inputs from recruiting and infiltration. Moreover, there are alternative strategies, such as avoiding combat for prolonged periods, which the Communists might adopt to reduce casualties and conserve their forces. Another option, though less likely, would be for the Communists deliberately to reduce the strength of the Regular forces, in order to preserve guerrilla forces and strengthen the political apparatus. The locale and effectiveness of all allied operations will also have an important bearing on future Communist force levels; losses in the northern provinces and western highlands could be made up more readily through infiltration than losses in the Delta, where the burden is on VC recruitment.

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66. In any case, we believe that a major effort will be required to maintain the Regular forces and guerrillas at or near present levels. To do so will call for both a level of infiltration much higher than that observed in 1967 and intensive VC recruitment as well. Considering all the relevant factors, however, we believe that there is a fairly good chance that the overall strength and effectiveness of the military forces and the political infrastructure will continue to decline.

67. *Logistical Support.* The Communists will continue to have difficulties with internal distribution of supplies in South Vietnam that will cause local shortages and interfere with Communist operations from time to time. Their dependence on supplies from external sources is growing and could increase further over the next year, even if their strength declines somewhat. Nevertheless, we believe that the Communists will be able to continue to meet at least their essential supply requirements for the level of forces and activities in South Vietnam described in this estimate.

68. *Future Strategy.* The Communists apparently recognize that the chances of a complete military victory have disappeared, and they aim instead at a protracted war. Their objectives in this phase of the war are to immobilize and wear down the Allied military forces, to maintain base areas, expand their political agitation and control in contested and GVN areas, and defeat the RD program. In pursuit of these objectives, their tactics are to combine and coordinate closely their military operations and political activity.

69. Our judgment is that the Communists still retain adequate capabilities to support this strategy for at least another year. Whether or not Hanoi does in fact persist with this strategy depends not only on its capabilities to do so, but on a number of political and international considerations not treated in this estimate, such as the state of Sino-Soviet relations, conditions inside China, and Hanoi's view of US will and determination. Even if some combination of circumstances should make it impossible or undesirable for Hanoi to continue employing large conventional forces, the Communists would still have the capability to continue some forms of struggle—though at greatly reduced levels.

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15 November 1967

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Potentially Controversial Judgments or Data Holding
Changes in 14. 3-67

1. Infiltration:

Agreed figures for CY 1966 are:

Accepted:	55,000
Possible:	<u>31,000</u>
Total	86,000

Thus far in CY 1967 (through 30 September) agreed totals are:

Accepted:	23,000
Possible:	<u>12,000</u>
Total	35,000

Judgment made in estimate (paragraph 12) is that:

"Infiltration thus far in 1967 totals about 35,000 in all categories (accepted and possible). Allowing for the probability that later information will raise these figures, and extrapolating, it now appears that total infiltration for 1967 will be no more than last year's and possibly somewhat less. We estimate that some 65 to 75 percent of the infiltration will probably consist of replacement personnel for existing units. The remainder will probably include seven to nine organized regiments which will add to the Communist force structure but not necessarily their total military strength, because losses have resulted in generally lower unit strengths. There still appears to be no clear-cut seasonal pattern in infiltration or any significant indication that Hanoi is unwilling to dispatch additional forces to North Vietnam."

There is no major controversy here, but individual infiltration is becoming more difficult to count, particularly in units that move back and forth across the DMZ.

2. Current Strengths:

14.3 changes both the figures and the format of current holdings. A copy of MACV's current (30 October) OB is attached. The estimate's changes are outlined below:

- a. Regular (Main and Local) Forces: MACV holds 116,700 as of 30 October. Estimate says (para 25 and Table 3):

NVA	54,000
VC Main and Local	<u>64,000</u>
Total	118,000

This figure fluctuates constantly. The discrepancy between MACV's figure and the NIE does not reflect a controversy.

- b. Administrative Services: These (also called Support personnel) are now carried at 25,653.

The estimate (para 27) raises this holding to "at least 35-40,000 Administrative Service personnel in South Vietnam." This does not include Support personnel in Laos, Cambodia or immediately north of the DMZ. Furthermore, as indicated by the "at least," this figure in the estimate is a floor threshold, not an encompassing range. This has been an area of controversy.

- c. Guerrillas and Other Paramilitary Elements: The current MACV holdings carry an "irregular" figure of 112,760, which was encompassed by the old range of 100-120,000, carried in 14.3-66. This figure includes both guerrillas and other irregular elements (Self Defense and Secret Self Defense). The figure has been assumed to be

made up of 1/3 guerrillas and 2/3 "others,"
i. e., the actual implied holdings have been:

Guerrillas: 33,333 - 40,000

Others: 66,667 - 80,000

14. 3-67 carries (para 30) a range estimate of 70-90,000 for the guerrillas only. It does not quantify any current estimate for the others, though it does say (para 36) that some documents suggest that in early 1966 the Self Defense forces (alone) were on the order of 150,000. (The full text of para 36 is attached hereto.) MACV explicitly did not want any quantified estimate of these "other" paramilitary elements' current size. We attempted to evolve a compromise which avoided a specific current number, but indicated that the reader should be thinking in six digits.

This guerrilla/irregular estimate is another major source of potential controversy. Note particularly that the new guerrilla figure (70-90,000) is not a reduction of the old "paramilitary" figure (112,760) but, instead, an increase in that figure's guerrilla component (33,333 - 40,000).

- d. Political Cadre: Old estimate (i. e., current MACV holding): 39,175. (NIE 14. 3-66 said 40,000) This is based on an old, out-dated and never accurate GVN figure.

14. 3-67, on the political organization, says: "Its numbers are large -- with a hard core estimated at about 75,000 - 85,000 -- but more important is the wide geographical extent of its power and the dedication and effectiveness of its personnel." We regard the 75,85,000 figure a distinct improvement over the old figure but consider it subject to further analysis and refinement. The term "hard core" is intended to suggest that there are others who do not appear in this figure.

3. Communist Losses:

No controversy in this area. For 1966 all losses estimated at 103,000, and for 1967 we estimate comparable figure will be 170,000. [Table 5]

Problem area is that these totals cannot be applied to individual components, i. e., regular forces, guerrillas, etc.

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4. VC Manpower Inputs:

Some controversy over recruitment level for this year. NIE's estimate of what recruitment was last year -- 7,000 per month -- agreed to by MACV.

MACV estimates 3,500 per month for first half of 1967, and is revising downward for last half. NIE estimates recruitment between 3,000 and 5,000 per month for all of 1967. This is based on our evaluation of the MACV study.

Copy #1 - Pres. Johnson via DCI
" " 2 - 14.3/67 Kew OB
" " 3 - GAC Chrono ✓
" " 4 - UAS "

Copy No. 3

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COMMUNIST GROUND FORCES IN SOUTH VIETNAM
(MACV Figures As Of 30 October 1967)

Regulars

NVA	53,800
VC Main Force/Local Force	62,902
	<u>116,702</u>

Administrative Services

25,653

Irregulars

112,760

(Note: about 1/3 of these are guerrillas, and 2/3 belong to either the self defense or secret self defense forces.)

Political Order of Battle

39,175

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NIE 14.3-67

36. Our current evidence does not enable us to estimate the present size of these groups (self-defense, secret self-defense, the "Assault Youth," or other similar VC organizations) with any measure of confidence. Some documents suggest that in early 1966 the aggregate size of the self-defense force was on the order of 150,000. This force and the other groups, however, have unquestionably suffered substantial attrition since that time, as well as an appreciable decline in quality, because of losses, recruiting of some of their members into the guerrillas or other VC military components and, particularly, the shrinkage in VC control of populated areas. Though in aggregate numbers these groups are still large and constitute a part of the overall Communist effort, they are not offensive military forces. Hence, they are not included in the military order of battle total. Nevertheless, some of their members account for a part of the total Communist military losses.

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NIE 14.3-67

TABLE 5

ESTIMATED COMMUNIST LOSSES IN SOUTH VIETNAM

	<u>1966</u>	<u>1967</u> (Estimated Total) <u>a/</u>
Killed-in-Action	55,500	90,000
Permanently Lost from Wounds	19,000	31,000
Military Returnees	13,000	21,000
Prisoners	2,500	7,000
Deserters	<u>13,000</u>	<u>21,000</u>
TOTAL	103,000 ^{b/}	170,000 ^{b/}

a/ The 1967 estimated totals are the projections of averages of Communist losses during the first 9 months of 1967.

b/ These totals include not only Regular military forces and guerrillas, but also an unknown number of other Communist elements such as self-defense, secret self-defense forces, assault youth, etc.

23 May 1967 document --
input to the DCI Audit Project --
chaired by Under Secretary of
State Katzenbach

6. The Enemy Force: Estimating the size, structure and effectiveness of the enemy force in South Vietnam is a difficult intelligence task complicated by methodological problems, the difficulty of acquiring hard data in a timely fashion, and the presentational issues involved in refining our data base in the light of new knowledge without giving data users the false impression that the enemy force has suddenly ballooned or without making new data difficult to relate to earlier analyses. There is, for example, the inevitable tension between the need to apply stringent criteria of confirmation and acceptability, which tend to produce inherently low "assessments" (in the real estate taxation sense), with the need, particularly on the part of unit commanders, for appraisals (in the real estate sales sense) which indicate what allied forces actually may be facing. Over the past year our methodology and data base have both improved markedly. Further refinement is still desirable, but some problems, particularly acquisition problems involving timeliness, are inherently insoluble (unless, for example, Communist infiltrators start defecting sooner after their arrival in South Vietnam).

7. Our review of all evidence available indicates that despite the allies' increasingly effective operations and resultant Communist casualties, the Vietnamese Communists have continued to expand the size of their main force structure in South Vietnam, both by infiltration and local recruitment. Though part of this main force expansion has been achieved at the expense of lower-level Viet Cong military formations (provincial and district units) and of the "political infrastructure," we believe the Viet Cong paramilitary and political organization is still probably far larger than official US order of battle statistics indicate. We think the official figure for main and local forces, currently 115,000, is probably fairly accurate, though lagging somewhat behind the actual input from North Vietnam. We estimate, however, that the strength of the so-called "administrative services" (and non-combat support troops) is in the 75,000 - 100,000 range, that the strength of the "irregulars" is in the 200,000 range, and that the number of Viet Cong political personnel is in the 80,000 range. Thus the overall strength of the Communists' organized force structure in South Vietnam is probably in the 500,000 range and may even be higher.

8. We are not suggesting that the total Communist force structure has increased dramatically in recent months, but do believe an accumulation of improvements in methodology and data indicates

Adams: "It is my belief, and I think the evidence shows, that American intelligence had so denigrated the Viet Cong's capabilities that we simply could not have predicted the size of the Tet attack."

* * * * *

The question is this. What if, on December 15, 1967, when the Saigon memo which predicted the Tet Offensive went to the White House, it had been accompanied by an estimate that the VC Army was almost twice as big as we thought -- would the White House have put two and two together? I don't know. It never happened.

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THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

April 19, 1968

Dear George:

I have been meaning for some time now to congratulate you on the superb job you did in briefing the President and his senior advisers during the two weeks prior to March 31. Yours was not an enjoyable task. You served the President well by holding your ground and telling us about the situation as you saw it in Vietnam. It was a brutally frank and forthright analysis. The President's speech of March 31 indicated that your briefings had a profound effect on the course of U.S. policy in Vietnam.

I want to congratulate you on this and on the excellent work you have been doing as the Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs.

Best wishes,

Sincerely,


Hubert H. Humphrey

Mr. George Carver
Special Assistant to the Director
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D.C.

convention that there is no acceptable rate of unemployment as far as I'm concerned as long as there is one American who wants a job and can't find one."

Tonight, the President and Mrs. Ford were to be heading back to

White House. Ford tentatively plans to return to California late next month for two Republican fund-raising dinners where he would be expected to share the platform with

See FORD, A-15

Ex-CIA Analyst Disputes Tet Offensive Charges

By Norman Kempster
Washington Star Staff Writer

Skepticism about their own conclusions and "petty bureaucratic" restrictions — not deliberate distortion of the facts — muted the CIA's warning of the 1968 Communist Tet offensive in Vietnam, according to the former intelligence analyst who accurately forecast the attack.

James V. Ogle said he tried to tell his version of the story to the House Intelligence Committee but was rebuffed. So he provided a copy of his prepared testimony to The Washington Star instead.

"We had predicted the Tet offensive," Ogle said. "It was all there, on paper, in the cables. But we didn't believe it. . . ."

THE PREDICTION was based on captured documents and the speeches of North Vietnamese Communist leaders, Ogle said. The evidence pointed to an offensive but there had been similar evidence before which had proved incorrect.

Later, when the Saigon office where he worked was riddled with bullets and spattered with blood, Ogle said he and a fellow analyst

finally realized just what had happened.

"Now we know what they meant," Joe (Hovey) said. There were tears in his eyes. "They meant what they said."

ALTHOUGH earlier reports had indicated that a Communist offensive was planned for sometime between Jan. 15 and Feb. 15, Ogle said a cable which would have pinpointed the start at Jan. 30 was not dispatched to Washington even though the evidence was available three days before the attack.

"The cable was never sent for the petty bureaucratic reason that the translation of the captured document had not yet been assigned a combined document exploitation number and so did not pass the tests set up to avoid double reporting," he said.

Ogle said he decided to speak out after Samuel A. Adams, also a former CIA intelligence analyst, told the House committee Thursday that the CIA and the military intentionally underestimated Viet Cong troop strength for domestic political reasons, resulting in an underestimate of Communist military capability.

See TET, A-8

Revived Hurricane Heading Toward Alabama, Florida

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MIAMI (AP) — Tropical Storm Gales extend outward 125 miles north

WASHINGTON
STAR
22-171

Continued From Page 1

Ogle said he prepared the testimony after receiving indications the Pike committee wanted to hear it. However, he said he was not called as a witness and was told later by a staff member that his testimony would not be required.

ADAMS SAID the intelligence community was guilty of "corruption" of its reports. He said the intention was to fool Congress and the public but that it ultimately contributed to U.S. losses in the offensive.

In his testimony, Adams said a CIA team in Saigon — Ogle, Hovey and Bobby Laton — forecast the offensive but underestimated its power because of too low troop estimates.

Sipping black coffee from a yellow mug, Ogle said in an interview that Adams charges were "irrelevant" because the Communists only used about 67,000 troops in the offensive.

"It was not an intelligence breakdown," Ogle said. "I realize the conventional wisdom is that it was, but it was not."

Ogle was bitter at the failure of the House committee to listen to his rebuttal of Adams.

"I THOUGHT they were trying to get at the truth," he said. "I am now sure they were trying to make political hay. They are guilty of the same thing Adams accused the CIA of, ignoring some of the facts for political purposes."

Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger, who briefly headed the CIA, said yesterday the Tet offensive did represent an intelligence failure.

But Schlesinger, who appeared on the CBS interview program "Face the Nation," said present congressional investigations of the CIA already may have gone too far and damaged national security. He said it is appropriate for Congress to review the agency's activities but "we do not want to throw the baby out with the bathwater."

IN ANOTHER reaction to Adams' sensational charges, two members of the House committee, Reps. David C. Treen, R-Tenn., and Dale Milford, D-Tex., demanded that Chairman Otis Pike, D-N.Y., call as witnesses 12 individuals who Adams said had played a part in developing phony troop estimates.

"Mr. Adams made serious and personally damaging charges against a number of persons," Treen and Milford wrote. "In accordance with rule 4.4 of the rules of our committee we believe that all such per-

sons should be afforded an opportunity to appear as witnesses.

When he believed it extremely important that the committee pursue the allegation that distortion of the military capacity of the enemy was the result of deliberate policy," the lawmakers said. "If the allegation is true, we need to know who is responsible for the formulation of the policy and the means by which it was carried out."

TREEN, MILFORD and Rep. Robert McClory, R-Ill., tried unsuccessfully Thursday to end the public testimony of Adams and take the rest of his statement in a closed committee meeting. They were outvoted 6-3.

Treen and Milford are part of the conservative bloc on the committee which has been consistently outvoted by a bipartisan group of liberals.

Ogle insisted that contrary to public opinion, the Tet offensive was a defeat for the Communists because of the frustration of their hopes that the South Vietnamese civilian population would join the insurrection. But he conceded that most Americans view it was a defeat for the allies.

OGLE ALSO disputed Adams claim that the only reliable U.S. infiltrator who was able to penetrate the Viet Cong was killed in the Tet uprising. Ogle, who was in Saigon while Adams was assigned to the CIA's Langley, Va., headquarters, said the man Adams described had not penetrated the Viet Cong at all.

He said the man was really a very skillful "analyst" who was able to predict Viet Cong actions on the basis of information he obtained from the outside.

Ogle said the CIA did not rely much on information supplied by infiltrators anyway because he said most of them were "at least triple agents," who were usually unreliable.

On one thing, Ogle agreed with Adams — the problem with intelligence in Vietnam was a failure of proper analysis, not a lack of information.

"THERE WAS never a shortage of intelligence in Vietnam," Ogle said. "There was always too much, too many low-level bits and pieces. As in all intellectual endeavors, if the bits and pieces didn't fit the puzzle you were working on you tended to ignore them."

Several members of the Pike committee have complained that the CIA spends too much of its time gathering bits of information and too little trying to make sense out of the data.

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N.Y. Park Chief Quits With Blast at Mayor

NEW YORK (AP)

of his back appointees"

Deaths from Hostile Action

1968

	Jan	Feb	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	Jan June
US	1202	2105	1540	1409	2169	1146	9571
SVN	2905	5025	2570	1922	3467	1974	17863
3 rd Nat.	111	147	88	85	85	92	608
Totals	<u>4218</u>	<u>7296</u>	<u>4201</u>	<u>3417</u>	<u>5421</u>	<u>3212</u>	<u>28065</u>

Extract from the book Tet! by Don Oberdorfer

DEDICATION

For Those Who Died
(January 29-March 31, 1968)

3895 officers and men of the United States Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps.

214 officers and men of the Republic of Korea Forces, Vietnam; the Australian Force, Vietnam; the New Zealand Army Force, Vietnam; and the Royal Thai Military Assistance Group, Vietnam.

4954 officers and men of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (South Vietnam).

58,373 officers and men of the Vietnam People's Army (North Vietnam) and the South Vietnam People's Liberation Armed Forces (Viet Cong).

14,300 civilian men, women and children of South Vietnam.

And Those Who Live, and Learn

From Lt. General Daniel Graham - 2 Dec 75

31 January - 21 February 1969

Helicopter and fixed-wing aircraft

58 destroyed -- 239 damaged

destroyed or
damaged on
the ground

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14 February 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD:

SUBJECT: Cost of Damage to US Aircraft During the Tet Offensive

1. Receipt of additional aircraft "flyaway costs" early this morning has enabled us to revise and firm-up our estimate of the value of damage and destruction to US aircraft during the 29 January- 11 February VC/NVA Tet offensive. We now estimate this total value at \$400 million. The value of aircraft destroyed is estimated at \$60 million; damage to other aircraft is estimated at \$340 million.

2. Our estimate has been prepared my costing aircraft listed as destroyed at their full flyaway cost. Those listed as damaged were costed at one-half of their flyaway cost. Of the total 1,116 aircraft listed by model in the damaged category, 513 sustained major damage and 603 minor damage. This spectrum of damage stretches from near total destruction to perhaps only several shrapnel holes which do not impair the operational capabilities of the aircraft. Necessarily then, the selection of one-half of flyaway cost to assess the value of aircraft damaged is somewhat arbitrary.

3. A breakdown of US aircraft damaged and destroyed between 1600 hours, 29 January and 1600 hours, 11 February (Saigon time) is shown below.

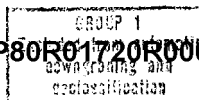
	<u>Destroyed</u>	<u>Damaged</u>	<u>Total</u>
Attack/Fighter ✓	16	123	139
Other Fixed Wing ✓	22	189	211
Helicopters .	57	804	861
Total	95	1,116	1,211

This total represents approximately one-quarter of the 4,743 US aircraft deployed in South Vietnam. A degradation of US air attack and combat support capabilities is the inevitable result of these losses.

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TET STATISTICS -- COMMUNIST TROOPS COMMITTED

1. (From 21 February 1968 CIA study): From 30 January through 13 February 1968 the available evidence indicated that approximately 58,000 Communist Main and Local Forces were committed in attacks on urban areas and military installations. Of this total, about 37% (circa 22,000) were North Vietnamese troops, concentrated in the I and II Corps area, where they accounted for 60-65% of the attacking forces. The remainder (63%) were VC forces -- circa 36,000. Of these, nearly 17,000 (about 45%) were Main Force units, the remainder being Local Forces. In addition, guerrillas were impressed as well as other subordinate components of the VC structure, some of these being upgraded to bring Main and Local Force units to full strength. The attacking forces included a number of raw, inexperienced recruits and many civilians were impressed to provide administrative support. About 7% of the units identified in the attacking elements were not carried, as such, in MACV's Order of Battle.

Other estimates of Communist troops committed during the Tet Offensive ranged from 67,000 to 80,000 but the number in question is obviously affected by the dates one uses to bound the Tet Offensive.

58,000	ml	74.2	%
<u>20,000</u>	<u>guer</u>	28.8	%

The intensity of the Communist Tet Offensive is reflected in the fact that 39 of South Vietnam's 44 provincial capitals, plus the autonomous cities of Saigon and Da Nang, were attacked. All of them were subjected to artillery and mortar fire or ground assault, and most of them were hit within the first three days. At least 35 of these capitals and the two autonomous cities were physically penetrated by Communist armed forces. In addition, at least 71 district capitals also were attacked. (For a list of the provincial and district capitals attacked, see Appendix B.) The Offensive was aimed at civilian centers of authority, as well as at military installations such as base camps, airfields, and logistical facilities.

NUMBER OF COMMUNIST TROOPS ~~XXXX~~ IN SVN DURING APRIL 1975 ~~XXXX~~ AND AS OF
1 DECEMBER ~~XXXX~~ 1975

I. APRIL 1975

A. 237,000 NVA/VC Combat Troops (20 Divisions)

1. of these 25-34,000 were VC -- these were the only effective VC forces
in SVN and they were integrated into NVA Divisions

B. Guerrilla strengths was 31-41,000 -- but these were not a combat
threat and they were not used during the fighting to any extent

C. Administrative Services was 101-116,000

1. Of these 43-48,000 were VC

II. December 1975

A. @ 205,000 combat troops

B. 74,000 Admin Services

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OB Conference

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18 Sept 67

The Director

GACarver, Jr.

Agreement on Viet Cong Strength
Figures

Attached for your information is a copy of the memorandum I gave Ambassador Bunker on 15 September as a wind-up report on our Saigon discussions. I also used this paper as the basis of my 16 September briefing of the CINCPAC staff.

George A. Carver, Jr.
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

Attachment
a/s

GAC:mee

Orig - DCI w/att

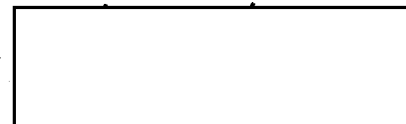
1 - ~~VC Military Capabilities and Intentions~~ w/att

1 - GAC Chhono w/att

1 - VAS Chrono ~~w/att~~

1 - VAS/RAC w/att

1 copy memo to Bunker -



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DIA

Saigon, Vietnam

A-2592

15 September 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Ambassador

SUBJECT : Agreement on Viet Cong Strength Figures

As I reported in our 14 September conversation, agreement has been reached between COMUSMACV and the representatives of CIA, DIA and the Bureau of Intelligence and Research on the following estimate of current Viet Cong strength:

MILITARY

Main and Local Forces	119,000 - (119,000)
Administrative Services	35,000 - 40,000
Guerrillas	<u>70,000</u> <u>90,000</u>

Total Military Force	224,000 - 249,000
----------------------	-------------------

POLITICAL CADRE

75,000 - 85,000

Aggregate Total	299,000 334,000
-----------------	----------------------

The issue of the "irregulars" (self-defense, secret self-defense, assault youth, etc.) derived from COMUSMACV strong feeling that no quantified estimate of current strength should be given (since this would give a number that could be taken and used out of context) and the need felt in Washington for some form of order of magnitude indication. This issue was resolved by treating the subject in narrative form. A copy of the agreed draft text on this topic was given to you on 14 September.

Though the above figures show an aggregate total, we in Washington are of the strong conviction - shared by our colleagues in MACV - that this aggregate total is meaningless and misleading. Washington publications on this topic will not use or refer to any such aggregate total.

Though we have reached agreement on a political cadre total using presently accepted definitions, we also agree that these

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definitions need considerable refinement and, hence, the number they dictate is not particularly meaningful or helpful. Present definitions include much more than the true political "leadership" but exclude many trained and full-time activists. General Davidson, my Saigon colleagues and I are jointly initiating an interagency effort to refine and improve our analysis and conceptual break-out of the enemy's political organization. When this necessary work is completed, the "political" figure in its present form will disappear.

I understand that General Westmoreland has formally endorsed the agreements outlined above and so reported to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. As indicated in our conversation, the discussions which led to these agreements were lively but most beneficial to all parties involved. The atmosphere has been cleared, we have much better understanding of each others' views, and I believe Washington and Saigon will now be on the same wave length, something that will greatly benefit all aspects of our common endeavor.

Per your request, I am appending a spread sheet which summarizes the initial Washington and Saigon positions and the process through which final agreement was reached. I would be most grateful if, through General Westmoreland, you would extend to General Davidson and all of his able, most impressive staff, the thanks of the entire Washington delegation for their effective, comprehensive briefings and other invaluable contributions to the success of our joint endeavor.

George A. Carver, Jr.
Special Assistant to the Director
of Central Intelligence for
Vietnamese Affairs

Attachment
As Stated Above

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	<u>NIE 14.3 28 August Draft</u>	<u>11 Sept. MACV Briefing</u>	<u>11 Sept. MACV Proposal</u>	<u>Washington Reps. Proposal</u>	<u>Final Figur Agreed</u>
MILITARY					
Main & Local Force	121,000 - (121,000)	119,000	119,000 - (119,000)	119,000 - 119,000	119,000-119,000
Admin Service	40,000 - 60,000	29,000	25,000 - 35,000	35,000 - 45,000	35,000- 40,000
Trillas	60,000 - 100,000	65,000	75,000 - 95,000	75,000 - 95,000	70,000- 90,000
Military Total	221,000 - 281,000	213,000	219,000 - 249,000	229,000 - 259,000	224,000-249,000
			(234,000)		
POLITICAL	90,000 - (90,000)	85,000	70,000 - 80,000	80,000 90,000	75,000- 85,000
Aggregate Total	311,000 - 371,000	298,000	289,000 - 329,000	309,000 - 349,000	299,000-334,000

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13 October 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable Philip Goulding
Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs

SUBJECT : Transmittal of Requested Comments

1. Per Mr. Henkin's 10 October request, I am forwarding the attached comments on the version of the proposed MACV briefing submitted with Mr. Henkin's memorandum.
2. The question of whether or not any public briefing on order of battle figures is given is a matter outside our purview and hence a matter on which this Agency can neither concur nor dissent.
3. It is our understanding that explicit instructions are in force that no such briefing is to be authorized without specific White House approval.

George A. Carver, Jr.
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

Attachment

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- ✓ 1 - GAC Chrono, w/att.
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- 1 - SVN OB File (?) *MACV Press Briefing*

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13 October 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable Philip Coulding
Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs

SUBJECT : Proposed MACV Press Briefing on Enemy Order
of Battle

1. We have carefully reviewed the proposed MACV press briefing on enemy order of battle attached to Mr. Henkin's memo of 10 October 1967. We have serious substantive and procedural problems with the 10 October version of this proposed briefing and hence cannot support it or concur in its use.

2. With regard to the substantive issues, we offer the following comments:

a. We have no problems with the 113,000 figure used for the regular forces though we have not seen the evidence or methodology supporting the statement that "regular strength peaked at 127,500 in September 1966."

b. On administrative services, we believe the operative sentence should indicate that the US Government now estimates that there are at least 35,000 to 40,000 full-time personnel in this category. The draft briefing portrays the 35,000-40,000 figure as a minimum-maximum range. We regard it as a minimum threshold, believe the number of full-time personnel may well be higher, and are certain that additional large numbers of individuals perform administrative support tasks on a part-time but more than casual basis.

c. On the guerrillas, we cannot accept the statement that current guerrilla strength "is clearly down to between 70,000 and 90,000 with strong indications that the actual figure is

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closer to be lower than the higher limits of the estimate." The last clause of that sentence is particularly unacceptable. The understanding reached in Saigon during the recent CIA-DIA-INR-MACV order of battle discussions was that the guerrilla strength is now probably (not clearly) between 70,000 and 90,000.

d. We also cannot accept the way in which the rest of what used to be called "irregular" forces -- i.e., the self-defense, secret self-defense, assault youth and other casual elements -- are written off as "fifth columnists" and "fellow travellers." This mis-states the facts. Although we agree that the self-defense, secret self-defense and assault youth should not be included in the military order of battle per se, we feel that in the aggregate these elements contribute a great deal to overall VC capabilities. Furthermore, evidence continues to come in showing that the VC make considerable use of these "irregulars" and not infrequently assign them actual combat tasks. We believe that any briefing must be candid about these VC elements and should generally follow the narrative account of their strength and function agreed in Saigon -- the text of which is attached hereto.

e. On the political cadre, the number used (75,000-85,000) is that agreed upon in Saigon but the number was not developed in the manner outlined in your 10 October draft. This draft suggests that the new figure was developed by taking the old figure of 40,000 and adding political elements at hamlet level. This is simply not true. The 40,000 (actually 39,000) figure is an old GVN figure in circulation long before our current definitions of infrastructure were developed. It bears no historical or other relationship to the new figure.

3. Apart from these matters of substance there are elements of tone and procedure in your 10 October draft with which we have considerable difficulty.

a. It is true that our new order of battle figures derive from greatly improved, though still imperfect, intelligence and do not reflect any recent absolute increase in the size of

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Communist forces. This fact and the thought that these figures will be subjected to continuous review and frequent changes should be the basic theme of any press briefing. The 10 October draft, however, overstates our present degree of confidence in the figures for the administrative services, guerrillas and political cadres. We are not this confident; in fact, we believe that new evidence will probably turn up and require us to modify these figures. If this occurs, the confident tone of any such press briefing will be recalled with considerable damage to our credibility.

b. The whole proposed treatment of the old irregular and new guerrilla figure will be torn apart by the Saigon press corps. It suggests that we have previously overestimated this category whereas exactly the reverse is true. As the press well knows, the old "irregular" figure of 100,000-120,000 was allegedly composed of one-third guerrillas and two-thirds self-defense/secret self-defense. Thus the press will believe, with justification, that our old "guerrilla" figure was on the order of 33,000-40,000. If we up the guerrilla estimate, as we should, to 70,000-90,000, this can hardly be called a downward adjustment.

c. Any attempt to ignore the other components that used to be carried in the "irregular" category or write them off as unimportant fifth columnists will be considered by the press (again with justification) as a clumsy piece of dissimulation.

d. On the political cadre, we would be much better advised not to lump our political cadre estimates with our military order of battle data nor to pretend that we now have a very firm handle on this component of the Communist organization. The 75,000-85,000 figure can be used, if necessary, but should be used as the number we get from applying our current definition of "infrastructure," with the added notation that this definition is in serious need of refinement and hence this number is perishable and not particularly meaningful. It should also be pointed out that we are now at work on

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refining our definition of the various components of the Communist political organization and hope to be able to assign meaningful numbers to these components as soon as this exercise is completed. When we do, this 75,000-80,000 figure will disappear.

4. We believe that the net effect of any briefing based on the 10 October draft would be to present a series of alleged intelligence judgments that could not be substantiated at this time and would almost certainly compound our credibility problems if they were presented in this form. Whether or not any briefing is given and the precise language to be used are, of course, matters outside our purview and ones that will require consideration at highest levels. We strongly recommend, however, that the briefing outlined in your 10 October draft not be given.

George A. Carver, Jr.
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

O/DCI/SAVA/GAC:lkp/13October1967

Distribution

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AGENTS

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be politically oriented and are assigned as "agents of influence" to manipulate policy. A preliminary analysis of what is believed to remain of the CNC's strategic espionage apparatus in Saigon suggests that South Vietnamese security agencies have apprehended less than half of high-level CNC nets operating there.

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and an extensive organization which manufactures forged documents. The documents are used by Communist "legalized" cadres operating in South Vietnamese territory. Like the Security Section, the Military Intelligence Service has a large informant network in areas controlled by South Vietnam.

7. Evidence is lacking on which to make a firm estimate of the number of agents the Viet Cong carry on their rolls as serving in the South Vietnamese armed forces and government structure. However, an analysis of captured documents, POW reports, and [redacted] suggests there may have been on the order of 30,000 agents in early 1969. The total, as shown in the tabulation, can be broken down roughly as follows (see also the table):

Military Proselyting Section agents (estimate based on extrapolations from Viet Cong agent rosters)	20,000
Security Section agents (estimate based on the size of the Section's agent-handling apparatus)	3,000
Military Intelligence agents (estimate based on ratios between types of agents)**	7,000
<i>Total</i>	<i>30,000</i>

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8. Such an estimate represents a spectrum rather than a homogeneous group. It conceals enormous differences in agent quality. Communist Party and Party Youth Group members, who occupy the higher end of the spectrum of agents, may be considered as the hard core. An analysis of a limited number of agent rosters suggests that they may comprise from 10% to 20% of the agent total (or 3,000 to 6,000, if 30,000 is used as a base). The large majority are ethnic southerners. Evidence in recent months indicates the Viet Cong are trying to increase sharply the number of Party and Youth Group members in the agent network.

9. The low-quality end of the spectrum includes several thousand operatives who are inept and unenthusiastic. They cooperate with the Viet Cong sporadically and often have little motive other than a desire to string lines out to both sides. Although they may comprise as much as half the estimated agent total, they continue on Viet Cong rolls because of administrative inertia, because of the ability of some of them to gull Communist case officers, or, most important from a numerical point of view, because of padding by Viet Cong agent-handling bureaucracies. Although often slipshod in the occasional performance of their duties, the lower quality agents are potentially dangerous should Viet Cong fortunes improve.

10. In any case, recent roll-ups of agents by the South Vietnamese security agencies indicate Communist operatives have occupied a number of key posts.

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